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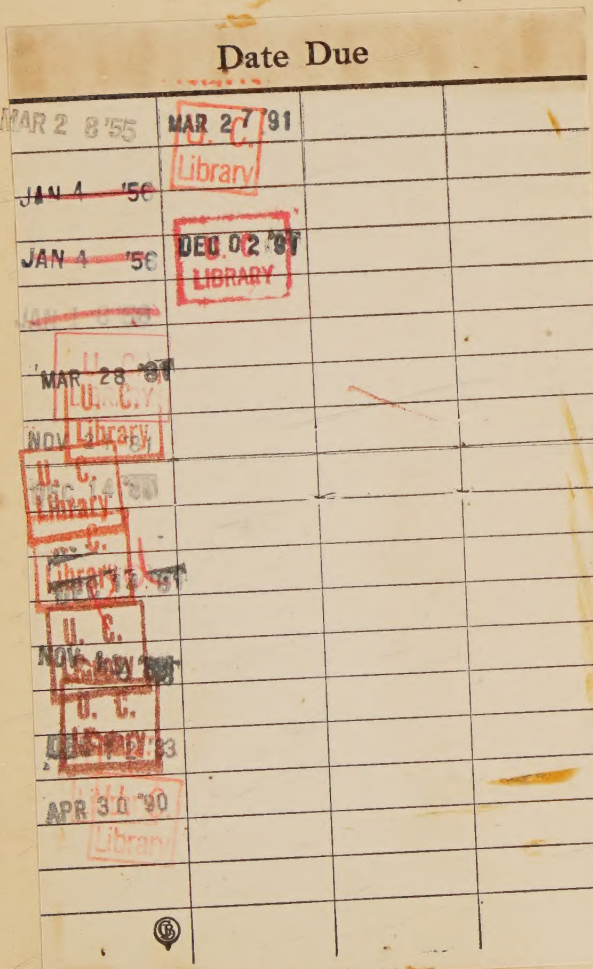

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TO THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD

THE IDEAL OF JESUS

I

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

In the twentieth century we inherit a Christianity. It comes to us from Jesus the Founder, but it comes, of necessity, through the long course of time. It is no fault of ours if in these centuries it has become modified, and is not altogether like that which came from him at first. We could not expect, and he could not expect, that his gift to the world would remain unmodified. He must have known that his gift of spiritual life would enter into the ever-changing human world, and influence the ages as they passed, and be influenced by them in turn. This certainty of change is due not only to human depravity, or even to human imperfectness: it is due just as much to the germinant vitality of the spiritual life itself. From all these causes combined it has come to pass that we inherit a Christianity differing in many respects from that to which Jesus gave the first impulse in the world.

It has come to us in so many forms that we are often perplexed, and eagerly inquire which is the true, or whether we can be sure of any of them. The

various forms of it have hard work to recognize one another. They differ in what they judge to be vital characteristics, and though they all claim the name Christian, they often deny it to one another. Perplexed by this variety in thought, in spirit, and in outward form, modern Christians are inquiring again and again what the real Christianity is. It is not unbelief that asks "What is Christianity?" and it is not mere curiosity. It is faith that asks, it is honesty, it is desire to know the truth and have the best. Christianity is so precious a thing, and so necessary to all good hopes, that the present age must know just what it is. No one inquirer may find an answer that will satisfy all, but the inquiry is certain to continue. The Christian heart feels that it must know what Christianity really is, and the Christian mind cannot refrain from the search.

It is well to know what we are looking for. In the present age we must not look for some definite institution or set of facts or ideas that corresponds entirely to the original gift of Jesus. The power of his religion to grow forbids that, and the power of the soil to influence the harvest forbids it again. Besides, Jesus was no founder of unchangeable institutions. We search his record in vain for any such idea of his purpose. He was no builder of pyramids, to stand unchanged for ages: he was an inspirer of men, who were to breathe the air of his kingdom and train their children to do the same. So we are not to look for the exact preservation of a deposit that he made with men, or the precise reproduction of a

pattern that he gave. That is not his way, nor is it a possible way. And yet nothing is more certain than that in our search for Christianity to-day we must look for the gift of Christ. If our Christianity have not the spirit of Christ it is none of his. Anything that is worthy of the name will have its source in him, and will have a living unity with the gift that he originally bestowed.

Our true guide in the discovery and estimating of modern Christianity is this: Jesus performed his work in the world, and gave spirit and form to his gift to the future, under the inspiration of what in modern speech we call an ideal—an ideal not only for his own life but for all life. Every far-reaching scheme of life looks onward to an ideal, which represents its aspirations and inspires its activities. Every forward-reaching mind, seeking to influence men, holds its ideal aloft as the banner of the march that it leads. Jesus had his ideal; he had his conception of what life ought to be, and of what he supremely desired that life might become. The vision floated before him of life rightly allied to the powers above and rightly exercised upon the plane of its being; of life personal, expressed in all such character and conduct as are worthiest of men, and of life social, wrought out in all such spirit and service as make the best and most successful world. It was an ideal for men and for man, for the life of men and the life of man, all held in true relation to God the source and end of all. It was in the light of this ideal that Jesus uttered every word of teaching, and wrought every

work of help, and gave himself to and for the world. To bring this ideal to reality he lived and died, and this ideal represents his contribution to humanity.

It represents his contribution to humanity better than anything else that we can mention. He bequeathed to the future no scheme of doctrines and no set of institutions. He was devoted to no church or school, but he was devoted to his ideal in life and death, and in it lay his hope for men. This represents him, and it would be well if his ideal were so bound to his name that he could not be mentioned without reviving it in thought. If any religion springs up to continue his work of blessing, we may be sure that it will be worthy of his name just so far as it cherishes his ideal and lives to realize it. The religion may take various forms, and accept various ways of thinking and modes of life, but it will be a Christian religion if the ideal of Jesus constitutes the object of its being.

So when we ask "What is Christianity?" and look about us for an answer, we are to look for a living ideal, to which certain men are trying to conform themselves, one another, and the world. If we find this ideal alive, inspired by Christ, we have found Christianity; if it has died, the real Christianity is dead, however many churches and sound doctrines there may be. And if in the twentieth century we are to be better Christians, we need to behold the vision that he beheld, to conceive of life as he conceived it, to ground the ideal in eternal reality as he

did, and to be mastered by the same constraining purpose to bring his vision into actuality in ourselves and all men.

It may be objected that an ideal is too vague a thing to occupy such a place as is here assigned to it. An ideal is an indefinite thing. It is unclear. No two persons can see it alike. No one can tell exactly when it is realized. No man can see Jesus' ideal as he saw it, or know how near he comes to fulfilling it.

The answer is that all this is true. An ideal is an indefinable thing, and is not the same to any two persons. The ideal that lay in Jesus' mind we cannot hope perfectly to discern. We do not know exactly what the realization of it would be. But this is the glory of ideals. It is their nature to be great and broad and comprehensive, too rich and full to be the same to all, too inclusive to be realizable in any single form or mode. The ideal in architecture, for example, is made up of certain qualities, none of which may be left out in thought or sacrificed in building—qualities like strength, beauty, dignity, appropriateness, durability. They are all perfectly conceivable, but not one of them is precisely definable. No two persons conceive of them alike. Each of them may be manifested in a great variety of ways, and there is no one architectural style in which alone they can be embodied. Yet all this makes no difficulty. Architects have their visions, and the one ideal draws them on to manifold success. The ideal, in fact, is the inspiration of all the styles, and gives

them all the value that they possess. No man can grasp it, but every man can realize it more or less. And if we can learn well of Jesus, we shall find that his ideal, too great for comprehension, is not too great for daily use, and is the one thing that all life needs to give it the noblest worth.

In this book I propose to follow the Master in the exhibition of his ideal. I think we have the means of discovering very clearly what the ideal was by which Jesus was controlled and which he held forth to his disciples, and I wish to bring it out from the record of his life and words. I shall endeavor so to expound him and his utterances as to make exhibition of the ideal to which he was devoted. I shall not attempt to do this exhaustively, making sure that I gather in every word by which the picture might be brought toward completion. I am not studying closeness of detail, but broad general portrayal, for practical use. I think it possible to bring forth from our records a clear view of the large ideal of man and his life that was characteristic of Jesus, and that he left as a guiding light to all who seek the best. It is scarcely necessary to say that if I succeed in doing this I shall be presenting the meaning and spirit of Christianity as it was first given to the world. I am sure that we can learn this clearly enough to make it our own if we will, and to judge our own Christianity by it. I shall be surprised if readers do not feel that it is truly the supreme ideal for human life. It certainly is the ideal to which the spirit of our Christian-

ity must be conformed, and in the light of which we must judge ourselves, our institutions, our aspirations, and our work. In the whole-hearted adoption of this ideal lies our only hope of becoming better Christians and of leading on toward a Christian world. In this light I see abundant reason to hope that the unfolding of the Christian ideal may be a useful service.

I have just said that I consider this undertaking practicable: the ideal of Jesus is so revealed that we can see it. If we study Jesus our field is the Gospels, and there I hope to bring my readers, if I may, into the presence of the Person whose ideal we desire to learn. The point upon which I would here insist is that for the ascertainment of that ideal our materials are entirely sufficient. This indeed, which is the great practical gift of Jesus to our life, is precisely the thing concerning him which our materials best enable us to ascertain.

We are often told that we know less about the actual words of Jesus than we have supposed we knew. We are reminded of the indirectness of our information, of the imperfectness of understanding and memory in his auditors, of the modifying force of tradition, of the reverent attributing to him of much that his followers had learned from him, of variations in manuscripts, and of the fact that we have his words only in a translation into the Greek. In all these suggestions there is truth. If I were undertaking a work that required an unquestionable list of all his sayings, equally certified and perfectly preserved, I should be attempting the impossible.

But I am undertaking a different task. I am seeking knowledge of the ideal of life that Jesus entertained and passed on to us; or, in other words, I am seeking a broad understanding of the mind of Christ. I wish to discover in the large what he said and did to show the manner of life that men ought to live, and may live through the grace of God. What I say is that for this work we have abundant materials.

As to the broad fact of the character and influence of Jesus, we need be in no doubt. Criticism has not taken away the mass of our material for judgment. The Great Teacher is not a myth or a shadow, nor is his teaching an elusive thing. From the records that we possess there stands out the figure of the Mighty One of God—mighty in fulness of spiritual truth, mighty in simplicity and straightforwardness, and mighty in the singleness of his devotion to the true end of life. He spoke to his contemporaries with desire to be understood, but he is far more intelligible to us of the twentieth century than he was to them. There is no doubt whatever as to what he stood for. Here he is like Socrates: whatever uncertainties there may be about details of his life or the manner of his teaching, no one ever doubts what Socrates stood for, or what is his contribution to mankind. This is exactly what we say of Jesus. There is no ambiguity about his position: the meaning of his message is as clear as the sun in the heavens. Various things about him we do not know and may never discover, but his dominant views of God and man and life are as well ascertained and known as

anything in history. So we are entering upon no uncertain quest.

When we have said that we are sure of the character of the main teaching of Jesus, we have implied something more. If we know the character of his main teaching, we know the character of the whole. As we become acquainted with him in the Gospels we discern an integrity so fine as to make us sure that in his spiritual attitude he was consistent. We are impressed by the conviction that with regard to those simple and sublime principles that lie at the base of his teaching he cannot have contradicted himself. So wise and true a soul did not deny his own highest words, or contradict the truth that he was conveying. His tone will not vary: to his ideal we know that we shall find him always loyal. When we have learned his ideal we have learned him, for he knew only one way of life.

Hence when I speak of the ideal of Jesus I speak of his whole revelation and testimony concerning the life of man. If I unfold it, I shall be dealing with his great characteristic conception; and it is to discover this that I now turn to the Gospels. And, plainly enough, my way is wide open. I am not dealing with one question out of many. This is no side issue or minor point, to be found only here and there, and proved by a text or two. This must pervade the whole material. By searching we certainly can find what we seek. If we know anything at all of Jesus Christ, we know enough to show us what his ideal is. This is why I am satisfied with the material

that lies ready to my hand. I am thankful that my purpose is to treat of that which we can best discover. When we wish to learn the Christian ideal, we draw near with receptive souls to him who has inspired it, and attend to the life and words in which he gave it forth. We are not long in discerning the view of God and man which is "the master-light of all his seeing." We behold his ideal in his life and words. His vision shines before us. It is not doctrinalized in our sources, or dogmatically put, even if that were possible, but is presented as a vital reality, and offered as an inspiration. He impresses us as living souls, we understand him, we catch his idea, we see that to which he points us. When we learn of him in his own spirit, his vision becomes ours.

In studying the Gospels to find the broad Christian ideal, I find myself more free in the use of my materials than I might be if the purpose were different. I am less limited by criticism. I am not proposing an exhaustive study of all the words of Jesus, distinguished from everything else. I am simply seeking to discover his supreme and constraining view of life. There is a large and harmonious body of matter in the Gospels, including their main substance, that shows his view of life with perfect clearness. It is homogeneous, and holds together in moral unity. As I examine it I cannot doubt that it really gives me what I am seeking. Therefore I take it as representative of him whom I am seeking to understand. Here I see what Jesus meant and stood for. But in the critical field two possibilities meet me. One of them

is that some of the passages that compose this harmonious group may not be satisfactory to textual criticism: it may not appear certain that they are words of Jesus himself; it may appear probable that they were attributed to him by some of his followers, instead of falling from his lips. They may be later unfoldings of his teaching. If I were drawing strict lines through the Gospels, I should have to insist upon the distinction that is noted here. But in the search for Jesus' large view of life such passages are not useless, nor need I disregard them. Utterances that fall in with his general thought have their value in such a study, even if they came not from him but from men who had learned of him. A characteristic word is not less illustrative of his ideal because it came from Jesus as it were at second hand, inspired by him in the soul of a man who but for him would never have spoken it.

The other possibility is that I may find in the Gospels some sayings attributed to Jesus that are not spiritually in agreement with this great central body of his teaching. I must own that there may be such passages, for I can perfectly understand how in the historical process by which the Gospels were produced they might creep in. What of these if I find them? Must I stumble at them, and fear that the unity of my sources is destroyed, and set myself to make good the injury by reconciling the contradiction that I have found in the words of Jesus? No: my purpose justifies me in passing them by. My confidence in Jesus' integrity and consistency is complete.

I am sure that he did not contradict the fundamental principles of his life. If I find sayings attributed to him that are inconsistent with his characteristic thought, I shall be sure that they are not his as they stand, but have been attributed to him through some misunderstanding. If they were his as they stand, they would have to be understood in the light of some unrecorded circumstance which we cannot recover. In any case they would not be available for our use in understanding him and his vision. After one has made acquaintance with the Master, the evidence as to what he said is not all found in manuscripts and other external witnesses. A part of it resides in the character of the sayings. "Can he have said it?" is a perfectly proper question, and one that we may often have to ask. It is not, as we might fear, a question that can have only a subjective and worthless answer, for it does not propose to make our preferences the touchstone for judging what he said. It simply means, "We know him as the author of this saying, and this, and this, in which we trace the ruling spirit of his life; can he, then, have been the author of this also, which contradicts that spirit?"—and it ought not to be so very hard to judge whether expressions are spiritually contradictory or not. Sometimes we may be in doubt as to the true answer to the question, and sometimes we may err in answering it. But if we err, we err in the exercise of a right and normal judgment, for the question is one that we have a right to ask.

Thus it comes to pass that I am more independent

of criticism and its findings than I might be if I were engaged in inquiry of some other kind. My quest justifies me in larger use of inward and spiritual evidence than criticism by itself is wont to allow. It is not as a critic, but as a student of morals and religion, that I listen to the Master to hear him describe his ideal.

It must be added that the ideal that is here set forth will be that of the Synoptical Gospels. There is no other way. How I have wondered about the mighty Fourth! The reason why it is not used in the present study is not that there are questions about its authorship and date. The reason is that whoever the author may have been, there is no question about the manner in which he used his historical materials. In a most unusual degree they have been cast in the mould of his own mind. Words that he attributes to Jesus he certainly has recorded in language of his own, and how far they represent the actual speaking Jesus, and how far his own adoring faith and reflection, he has not enabled us to tell. And so, just at the vital point for the present purpose, his writing fails me. Utterances that have been consciously recast by another mind, however true their spiritual testimony may be, cannot rightly be used for the purpose of setting forth the actual ideal of the living Jesus himself.

Perhaps I should apologize for disappointing one possible expectation. In a study in the Gospels I might be expected to follow the custom of citing chapter and verse in text or foot-note whenever I quote

Scripture or refer to it; but this I do not propose to do. I wish my reader to read right on. Moreover, I shall be dealing with the most familiar matters in the Bible; and the Gospels are not so large, or so unfamiliar, that a reader may not be trusted to find the special statements for himself if he wishes to have them before his eyes.

II

THE IDEAL AND THE METHOD

The ideal of Jesus is as broad as the whole field of ethics and religion—that is, as broad as the field of life; and his method in making it known is a method adapted to bring to pass a strong and independent possession of the character in which it consists.

Who first called Jesus the Great Teacher we do not know, but of the lofty names that rightly belong to him this surely is one. Through all Christian time he has stood before the world as the supreme teacher in religion. Other teachers of religion there have been, before him and after, but he stands out pre-eminent in quality and power. To those who learned of him he imparted a conception and an inspiration that made of religion a new thing. His own vital conception of God and man, life and salvation, he so imparted to other souls as to transfigure the religious life. He created the Christian religion, and has been the living source of religious experience to a large part of mankind for almost two thousand years. Directly he has given forth epoch-making truth and life, and indirectly, through those whom he has instructed and inspired, he has given innumerable

unfoldings and applications of his primary message. In religion Jesus Christ is the Great Teacher.

In modern times he appears equally great as a teacher of ethics. This second character was never unknown to Christians, and yet in an important sense it is new to them. Not so very long ago he was regarded almost as a teacher of religion only. In the rank and file of Christians the name ethics was not very well known, and the distinct field of interest which it represents had not become familiar. Some of us can remember when the name religion covered the whole field of Christian interest. It was of course understood that Jesus bade us do right, and taught us many of our duties, and the high graces of the Christian character were commended to us in his name. He was the Lord of holy life for his people, and the counsellor of good life for all. But there was a theological embarrassment. Good works had almost been removed from the sphere of ethics to that of doctrine, and were discussed chiefly with reference to their place in the scheme of salvation. Were men to be saved by them, or without reference to them? Had they any real value? Standing by themselves, were they an advantage to a man or a disadvantage in the sight of God? The question whether a man was to be saved by his good works often seemed almost to eclipse the question whether he was performing any: sometimes, indeed, the discussion tended to discourage them. By this inheritance of a doctrinal discussion from the Reformation the proper estimate of the importance of conduct was long obscured in

the Protestant churches, and the normal interest of Christians in ethics was postponed. The discussion was a vital one in its day, and the doctrine involved is vital forever; nevertheless, from the controversy there resulted a most unfortunate slurring of ethics in the teaching of Christians. In the harm that was done there was included a serious misconception of Jesus Christ. That he held ethics and religion in inseparable unity was not taken to heart as an actual fact. So far as he did teach conduct, it was thought to be as a kind of appendix to religion—just as good life itself was regarded as a corollary to religious life, a matter of inference from the motives that come with salvation. That Jesus the Saviour of men was actually interested in human conduct for its own sake, and that the application of his moral teaching ranged as wide as humanity, was scarcely a vital conception among the Christian people. So the Master was partly understood and partly misunderstood by his friends, with the result that the equal interest of God himself in human conduct everywhere was unhappily obscured.

But at present we are coming to look with different eyes upon ethics, and upon Jesus too. Upon Jesus we look with eyes that see more of his historical reality and vitality. Modern study has given us a new angle of vision. It is the living personal Jesus embosomed in the life of mankind that the Gospels reveal to us. He is nearer us than we thought, and we understand his words in the light of their living context of humanity. He speaks more about our daily affairs

than we once thought possible to the Son of God. Learning that nothing human was foreign to him, we welcome him to a more intimate Mastership, and a more practical. The change is most wholesome. And while we have been learning this about Jesus, the modern world has been learning to see ethics in a new light. The doctrine of right character and conduct has been coming to its own, and taking its place beside the doctrine of religion. Imperfectly indeed, and yet really, the best thought of the age, and the common life as well, is finding out the absolute supremacy of ethical considerations. Ethics has risen to the height on which religion stood alone, and will never again come down therefrom. Consequently we have no difficulty in thinking of one and the same Great Teacher as standing equally for ethics and religion. Indeed, we now see that a teacher who did not stand equally for ethics and religion would be a one-sided teacher and a misleading guide. It is true that there are still some Christians to whom the word ethics or ethical seems a cold and unspiritual word, suggestive of non-religious life and self-righteous motive. But this is only a survival of misjudgment, and the fact is more and more recognized that by the teaching of our Master Jesus the two fields are equally covered—as indeed they must be if he is what we take him for, the Teacher sent from God. There is only one divine ideal, and it comprehends both fields, or it would be no divine ideal. Accordingly, with no slightest derogation from his religious value, and with fine enlightening

effect upon our conception of his greatness, we are able to add to the titles of Jesus the worthy name of the Great Teacher in Ethics.

It will be well if we can think clearly of the callings of the two teachers who are thus set before us. A teacher of religion must needs be a revealer of the unseen. He has to do with the invisible life of men, the life of the soul. He shows them what great realities there are in the invisible life, and how their own being may find there its satisfaction. A poor and low religious teacher will grope his way, and find what he can, and tell what little he knows; but the ideal religious teacher will discern that which really is, and open to men the truth concerning the higher element in the human lot. He will tell them of their relation to the living God, show them what God requires of them and will do for them, open to them the fount of help that they cannot see, inspire in them the power to live as in sight of this invisible reality, and train them in the high art of subduing all their life to the governance of the great Unseen. A teacher of ethics, on the other hand, is an interpreter of certain things that are seen. He views men in their life and character, and conduct in the light of right and wrong, or moral good and evil. It is his office to help men to live as they ought in all their affairs. He appeals to the moral nature, turns the searching moral light upon actual and tangible affairs of every kind, helps men to the right point of view for self-judgment and for mutual judgment, and thus seeks

to establish and confirm the dominion of duty in human life. An inferior teacher in ethics may do the best he can, but the ideal teacher will throw the light of essential and eternal righteousness upon all temporal affairs and establish in men that which forever ought to be. Such are the two callings, different yet perfectly harmonious. It is evident that if one teacher covers these two fields, he will cover the entire field of human life, viewed in its higher aspects; and it is evident also that it is the ideal way for one teacher to cover both these fields. If one Great Teacher can illuminate the invisible world and rectify the visible, teaching men to live as they may with God and as they ought with one another, the best that can be conceived for mankind will be in his hands. And Jesus is the Great Teacher, and his mission covers the whole field, and the ideal that he seeks is the perfect life in ethics and in religion.

However freely it is recognized that Jesus is a teacher of ethics, the fact is larger than it has been commonly supposed to be. If a reader of the Gospels will notice how large a part of his recorded teaching relates to what men ought to be and do, and how small a part to anything else, the result may be surprising. By far the larger part is ethical teaching as here defined. Of abstract truth he uttered very little, and of truth non-moral in its bearings, none. He was a teacher of what men ought to be and do.

Yet Jesus differs utterly from teachers of the science of ethics. Of their methods and problems he knows nothing. He says nothing about the absolute ground

of morality. He does not discuss the philosophy of conduct or character. He pays no attention to ethical problems as problems, or shows that he ever thought of them. He puts forth no list of things permitted and forbidden, and makes no suggestions about deciding obscure cases of conscience. The teaching of his time and country abounded in ethical hair-splitting, but nothing of the kind can be charged to him. He enters into no fine detail of ethical counsel, nor does he enter the region of comprehensive theory. Systems of Christian ethics, simple or elaborate, have been formed by his followers, but none did he construct. If Christians will have a system founded on his teaching, they must make it—he gave them none.

When we turn to speak of Jesus as a teacher in religion, we make no real transition. With him each subject pervades the other. If he spoke much of what men ought to be and do, he spoke always in the presence of God, and regarded all life of men as lived there. From that realm he brought motives into the realm of ethics. But apart from the application of the great reality to their moral life, Jesus taught men of the God to whom they were bound by a vital tie, of the character that he bears, of his heart toward them, of his care over them, of the outpouring of his heart to them in grace. He made men feel that it was the height of privilege for them to live with the God and Father whom he revealed; and by a power all his own he brought men into the actual living of that life in God. Thus he was the Great Teacher

in religion. Yet, in religion as in ethics, he was no teacher of the science. He never discussed or expounded religion, and took no position as a theologian. The problems of religion, as modern men call them, had no place with him. Doctrines he neither stated nor discussed. In religion as in ethics, the teaching of his time was full of orthodox formality, but he never formalized. Neither in fine detail nor in elaborate theory did he teach religion. His principles in religion are quite ascertainable, and stand forth in a splendid unity, but no system of doctrines or scheme of religious observances did he hand to his disciples or bequeath to us. Here again, if his followers required a system they must make it for themselves. It is worth while to remember that Jesus was a layman; and as he was neither a priest nor a rabbi in the old faith, so he was neither the head of a cult nor the formulator of a system in the new.

His manner of going about the work of his life was the simplest and most natural that we can imagine. His general manner was so informal that we can hardly call it a method, but if we call it so, it was the practical method. What he taught of ethics and religion we learn from the impression that he made, and makes, through life and words. If we watch him, we find him teaching ethics and religion together all the time, by the same life and words. This blending of the two was the glory of his work among men: in him religion and ethics met together, and kissed

each other, and his expression of them to the world was as natural to him as breathing.

Living among men, he taught them by example. His life shows his ideal, for it lets us know what he loved and hated, what he approved and condemned. His avoidance and omission of sin in his own life set his visible condemnation upon the common evil, and his daily virtue showed his heart set upon the perfect goodness. As for his ruling motive in all this, he lived as a man with God, and his reference and deference to his Father in all things showed men where to find inspiration for fidelity and holiness. That is to say, his own life in religion fed the springs of noble ethics. His self-sacrificing spirit set a higher key for life than men had known, and his heroic self-assertion gave new beauty to his self-sacrifice; but both self-sacrifice and self-assertion were inspired by loyalty to the will of his Father. His unswervingly high aim, always refusing to yield or temporize, was a supreme example in the highest style of life, but its springs were in love and reverence for God. His example in the ethical life is a social example as well as an individual one, for what example in social practice can compare with his devotion to the good of men? But in this he was doing the will of God and acting in the spirit of his kingdom. And as to the manner in which the high ethical result was wrought out in his actual life, we can watch the play of purpose and temptation in his career, and see how faith in God and faithfulness to his will won the victory. In the study of his life it is given to us to watch Jesus advancing to the realization of his own ideal.

Not that Jesus was planning or intending to frame an example adapted to the instruction of men, and deliberately constructed his life accordingly. He was not a moral artist, but a moral agent. He was simply living the human life in genuine simplicity, unspoiled by self-consciousness or self-exhibition, putting into daily action the spirit which is the secret of all good living before God and man. His own life was the ideal life in respect of simple naturalness.

Living among men, he taught them also by the living word. We possess only fragments of his utterance, and long for more, but we are sure that we have enough to show us what he stood for. Not that he was planning a definite course of instruction for men: he was more natural than that. His instruction from day to day was simply intended to help men, and make them better. Taking men where he found them, he sought to make better human beings of them, in their relations with their Father and their fellows. In this practical effort his method was wholly informal. He taught no school, and had no set time or place to speak, but had all seasons for his own. Never did he speak a professional word: he was no professional man. He was always unconventional, living and walking with men, and talking freely with them as occasions arose. The occasions came unforced, springing naturally out of human affairs, or suggested at his own impulse. Passing events gave him texts. Often he drew illustration from the realm of nature, and oftener from human affairs and relations of man with man. Back of all his utterances lay his eager fellowship with men and

his unfailing consciousness of God. In the various occasions of speech he uttered some word which it was right and normal for men to act upon, and thus, the more powerfully because so naturally, he reinforced the vital quality both in ethics and in religion.

We are not surprised to find that this teaching from day to day concerned itself always with the case in hand. He did not go out of his way to make occasions, but gave immediate attention only to such matters as he met, and spoke always the word for the hour. He did not offer to his hearers instruction that did not apply to them, or extend his discourse for the sake of completing the subject. There is no indication that he contemplated a universal treatment of ethics or religion, or was planning to cover all the ground. He did not give forth instruction that would come into effect only in distant ages and under new conditions. Accordingly we are not to look to him for teaching on all subjects, either in ethics or in religion—a lesson that Christians might have learned long ago to their great advantage. There are many practical questions of great importance that had not come into existence when he spoke; and upon these he bore no testimony, except by giving utterance to principles that would apply to them when they arose. He did not even touch upon all the urgent moral issues of his own day; and of religious issues that are peculiar to our day certainly he took no cognizance. So we may be sure that we cannot expect to receive from his hands a full text-book of directions for the modern life.

But we receive from him what is far better than a text-book of practical details. Concerning the temporal application of eternal truth, Jesus is the supreme teacher. He is the supreme inspirer too; indeed, it seems too little to call him teacher, when his great work was the imparting of spiritual power. He knew the eternal realities that give significance to our present life, and he lived in order to bear witness to them and bring them to their due effect. He knew that there is no incongruity, as men often imagine that there is, between the eternal and the temporal, the profound and the practical, the divinely great and the humanly commonplace. He perceived that the actual grounds of duty in every field and at every fireside are spiritual and eternal, and that the commonest life needs the highest inspiration. Therefore he brought the everlasting realities into their normal connection with the ordinary day's work. He showed what men should be and do in view of those relations to God and their fellows which take hold on eternity. Thus it was that he exhibited ethics and religion as woven together. He grounded the earthly morals in heaven, and brought heaven into the earthly morals. He suffused morality with religion: he attached every fibre of the human life to God. He made men feel that wherever duty meets them, or moral opportunity, there God looks them in the face. In fact, of his teaching, ethics is the body and religion is the soul; it was devoted to making men what they ought to be, and it was endowed with life by the breath of God.

In this union we behold his ideal, of ethics and religion in one. From this we are not to infer, however, that there is no ground for a sound doctrine of ethics apart from religion. From the first age of human existence the world has had its ethics, because men had their mutual relations, out of which duties inevitably sprang. If we knew nothing of God, we should still owe duties to our fellows, and be under moral obligations to them and to ourselves. No more than religion did ethics wait for its birth until Jesus came. He found them both in the world, but for ages they had been scarcely more than loosely joined together. They had been drawing toward a closer unity before he appeared. But he revealed them as simply two aspects or sides of the one life of man, and proclaimed that vital oneness in which they are inseparable and coeternal. In this unity consisted his ideal, and the true ideal of humanity.

With this conception of his purpose and quality, we do not wonder that Jesus is not an argumentative teacher. He could not be. How unlike he is to Socrates the convincer! He is the great proclaimer of eternal truth. Accordingly his teaching is morally axiomatic and self-evidencing. He does not defend it. If men reject it, it is not because his reasoning does not convince them, it is because the teaching itself does not appeal to them. Recognition is what it asks, and acceptance as true. Its success consists in winning its way, so that men acknowledge it and give it the place of truth in their life. If his

ethical teaching ever seems to fail, it is because it has not been understood, or because men are below its level, or because it has been carried into new conditions without the adaptations that his wisdom would make. If his religious teaching ever seems to fail, it is because men have not had the moral power and liberty to discern it truly for what it is, and to make it rightly their own. When his ideal is discerned as ideals are designed to be, not as a fixed law but as an inspiring perfection, it will be seen to be simply the eternal good.

The descriptive word that stands at the head of this chapter must be unfolded. It is that the method of Jesus in making his ideal known is one that is adapted to bring to pass a strong and independent possession of the character in which it consists. This means that he was a character-builder, who counted upon making his ideal more than a mere idea, and implanting it as a force. He was a maker of manhood. He taught personality to direct itself from within. His ideal was the prophetic ideal of the new covenant, set forth by Jeremiah and quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, according to which the law of God was to be written upon the heart. Both the standard and the inspiration of the right life were to be within.

We see this illustrated in the fact that his teaching dealt scarcely at all with anything like rules of conduct, but took the more searching and helpful form of principles. This fact is vital in our study. Working by rules was vastly overdone in his day,

and the futility of the method was daily proved before his eyes. The law as a system of rules was defeating itself. His idea of the way to bring in right living was very different from that of law. He knew that the working power must be within. He would lead men to act upon sound principles out of a free heart, to give glad exercise to good affections, and thus to be genuine doers of the work for which they were created. This could not be done by rule: it required education of the man. His training could not take the form of an external discipline: it must be personal, inward, flexible, suggestive, transforming. It is very true that Christians have often understood Jesus to be a lawgiver, and taken Christianity for a new law imposed by him, better than the old but nevertheless a law. He could scarcely be more profoundly misunderstood. He was not a lawgiver, but a revealer, an enlightener, a renewer, an awakener of motives and a mover of men. It is insufficient even to describe him as a teacher—how much more as a lawgiver! He was an inspirer, a creator of ideals, a deliverer from spiritual limitations, a vivifier of souls, a breather of power to fulfil the ideals that he created.

I think it will be worth while to study some sayings of Jesus that illustrate this practice of his, of teaching by principles rather than by rules. The passages that I shall quote will do something more than confirm the method; they will help us to see in what manner he put it in exercise.

In the Sermon on the Mount according to Matthew, in the discourse that is associated with the choice of the apostles according to Luke, Jesus speaks in close connection of two topics that to a casual reader might seem not to have very much in common. They are Retaliation and Generosity. The order of utterance is not quite the same in the two reports, and in the Third Gospel the movement of speech is more rapid and eager than in the First, and the exhortation is in greater detail: yet the two are essentially alike in their teaching.

The Old Testament gives its sanction to revenge: there "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" was permissible retaliation. Cruel as this may seem to us, it was really, in its origin, a limitation upon an ancient privilege. Private revenge was an outgrowth of immemorial tribal revenge, and once had free scope, but now the law restricted retaliation to equality, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but no more: and even this was under the supervision of the law, and the injured man was answerable for observing the limitation. But now Jesus, with his "I say unto you," declares that even this amount of retaliation must be given up. The whole matter is to be left to that past time to which it belongs. No retaliation at all, he says, and no resistance to the evil man: on the contrary, all manner of good is to be done to the doer of harm. Enemies are to be loved, and generosity without stint is to be poured out upon those who have never earned any such thing. The demand is so absolute and far-

reaching as often to be condemned as extravagant. Not only is blessing to be returned for cursing, and prayer for persecution, which might be taken as a matter for the inward spirit: there are outward acts as well, and these are described without mercy, with no reservation at all on account of their tremendous difficulty. If you receive a blow on your cheek, turn the other to be struck; to the man who sues you for one garment, give two; if impressed into service to go a mile, go two miles; refuse no one who wishes to borrow; ask not again the goods that some one takes away; lend without hope of return; give without measure. In Luke the Golden Rule, given elsewhere in Matthew, is woven in in the midst of this call to limitless generosity, and in both versions the appeal is grounded in the example of God, who acts thus himself.

No wonder that this teaching is difficult. It has usually been assumed that these sayings were rules, or something near to rules, and all the difficulties of literal obedience have sprung at once into sight. How can human nature be expected to act in this manner? and if we did, what would be the result? This reads like a demand for undiscriminating conduct, in which the normal use of reason, judgment, common sense, shall be dispensed with. Experience seems to show, too, that such undiscriminating generosity is not true kindness. It is alleged that unflinching obedience to these counsels would be disastrous to society, and not only to its selfish interests but to its real welfare. However that may be,

it is certain that only a few of the followers of Jesus have been thoroughly convinced that it would be wise to act thus or that it is their duty to do so, and fewer still have consistently tried to follow these counsels. Here Christendom, whether it has rejected the spirit of the Master or not, has plainly parted company with his written language.

But the matter appears in a different light if we drop the idea of rules and look at the principle that is involved in these directions about retaliation and generosity. Compare the principle that dictates retaliation, and produces it too, with the one that Jesus would have us substitute for it. The working principle of retaliation is that the fault or sin of the other man is to determine what I, whom he has injured, am to do to him. Has he harmed me intolerably? That makes me wish to kill him. But no, the law says, you may not kill him, for that would go beyond his injury to you; but you may be even with him, and do him as much harm as he has done to you. So if he has put out my eye or knocked out my tooth, his eye or his tooth is mine to take. It is not I that decide to do injury to his body; he has decided it for me by harming me. Because he has been a violent man toward me, I am to be violent also. I am to do as I am done by, and become like the evil man. But when we listen to the voice of Jesus, we are told exactly to reverse this movement. Our Master, high-minded and true, says, in effect, Do not permit another man's wrong-doing to determine what you shall do. Decide it yourself. When

you have been wronged, let your own better heart determine your conduct. One man's moral and practical attitude toward another ought not to be dictated by that other man's enmity or abuse. How shall it be decided whether you are to love or hate a hostile man—whether you are to pour out upon him deeds of kindness or deeds of injury? "He has decided it," clamors the revengeful heart. But no: it shall not be so among you. In spite of him, take the matter into your own hands. Settle it yourself, by the exercise of your divinest affection. No matter how hard and provoking the case is, give him a love that he has never given you, and show him kindness that his heart knows nothing of. A blow has been struck in anger, and has fallen on your cheek: now who shall decide upon the destination of a second blow, if a second is to be struck? The other man seems to have decided for you that a second blow must fall upon him, as heavy as his was; but learn not to let that decision stand. Decide yourself that if a second blow be struck it shall fall upon you, and turn your other cheek to receive it, rather than be governed by another man's wrong-doing. Instead of allowing his evil to be master of you, be your own master, and substitute your own loving heart and will completely for the revengeful spirit. Thus overcome evil with good.

Jesus would not claim that this might not be hard to do, in this special case or in a hundred others, but the clear rightness of it is not hard to see. In fact, this is the plainest and most axiomatic moral and Christian counsel, as soon as we look upon it as the

enunciation of a principle. Nothing better than this will ever be taught about a man's attitude toward those who have done him wrong, and the applications of the principle are without number.

As for the extreme and paradoxical form in which the principle is expressed, it throws the strongest emphasis on the principle itself. Apparently the expression is made so intense in order to get this emphasis at the strongest. I have expounded one example, but the others teach the same lesson. From retaliation Jesus passes at once to generosity, for the two illustrate the same principle. So does submission to wrong, which comes in also. In all these matters his counsel is, in effect, Swing clear over to the other side. Submit to what is unreasonable, he says, rather than do a selfish or revengeful deed. Live out the generous temper; trample selfishness under foot, and make generosity the law of your life. Always remind yourself that it is difficult to carry that temper too far. Do not be afraid of overdoing it, for there is far more danger of underdoing it. These extreme words about giving without limit and lending without hope, that seem so far beyond the limit of the practicable, are apparently intended to drive this wholesome principle sharply home. And if we look at the clear principle of the commands rather than at their paradoxical form, we shall have no difficulty with them—except the difficulty of attuning our hearts to so high an ideal.

The ideal is traced to a source higher than man. We must add that the appeal against revenge and in favor of broad helpfulness is grounded in the duty

and privilege of likeness to the heavenly Father. Jesus reminds his hearers that no evil in men dominates God, so as to defeat or obscure his grace in his dealings with them. In God there is no retaliation, and no hatred of those who hate him. He is kind to the unthankful and evil: he gives his sun and rain alike to just and unjust. Thus the example of his providence supports the lesson that has just been taught, for the sinfulness of men does not determine what he does toward them. It is his own heart that decides that question, and it is a heart of patient and forgiving love that waits to bless. Men who imitate him in this shall have the incomparable reward of being his sons. They are beginning to bear his character in the true filial way, and it is their destiny to be perfect even as he is perfect in the unselfish grace, a destiny toward which it is their duty and glory every day to strive. Thus do ethics and religion shine out together in the Master's ideal. Sound and sweet morality in the every-day relation between man and man is recognized as the true sign of the filial relation to the eternal God.

There could be no better illustration than this of the character of the Master's influence. He was not telling men what to do, as the law had done; he was awakening them to a sense of what they should do and why they should do it. He was training them not for obedience to commandments but for free doing of the will of God. So he did not hamper them by precepts, but reinforced them with principles. It was not that he wished a man always to turn the

other cheek; he wished him to have intelligent self-mastery in righteousness and love. Of course this is the only way in which a great ideal of life and character can be actually imparted. An ideal is nothing until it is an inward thing, possessing the heart; and in these paradoxical sayings Jesus was offering the ideal of strong self-mastery and will to bless. So it is of little consequence whether the paradoxical commands as they stand are practicable or not. The principle that they embody is practicable in a thousand forms.

We have to own that Christendom has failed to rise to the Master's principle here, but the chief evidence to that effect does not reside in its omission of the particular things that are here commanded. The failure lies in the prevailing temper of life. The spirit that dictated the code of honor, according to which insults must be avenged, has not become extinct in men or nations, and the spirit of love that inspires free and wise generosity has not fully come in. As to the manner in which the better spirit is to do its work when it comes, these counsels of Jesus are not rules, they are suggestions and illustrations. Rules he could not give for such a work, for rules must always accord with conditions, and conditions vary from age to age. What he has done is to encourage the spirit itself, by which alone the ideal can be fulfilled.

There is a case in which Christendom has almost entirely departed from obedience to a plain and direct

imperative of Jesus; and the fact is very suggestive with reference to his method of teaching. In the Sermon on the Mount he quoted from the old law, which said, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thy oaths." This meant that the oath was to be held sacred, and the word was to be kept, or the promise performed, as a duty owed to God. "But I say unto you," said Jesus, "Swear not at all."

For the understanding of this of course the surrounding facts must yield their light. An oath is an appeal to God in confirmation of something said, whether in affirmation or in promise. The practice of such appeal grew up when institutions were ill-developed, and each man had to look out as best he could for the fulfilment of promises that were made to him. The appeal to God was a safeguard, first required of the promiser and afterward volunteered by him. In late Judaism such appeals to God could not be called necessary, but they continued, and were in great vogue. A great system of oaths had grown up, which corresponded well to the methods of a formal religion, but was harmful to spiritual religion. To avoid the solemnity of the appeal, any sacred thing was substituted for the name of God. Thus oaths became light and vain, the appeal to God was degraded, and sanctity went out of holy things.

In the presence of such facts Jesus said, "Swear not at all." On another occasion, as we read, he analyzed the current practice of swearing and de-

nounced the various evils that entered into it. But we must not fail to note that in connection with this prohibition he gave a reason for it, and a very plain one. Swearing, he said, ought to be superfluous. When a man speaks, his Yes and No ought to be enough, and whatever goes beyond this simple affirmation "cometh of evil." It was only because of the evil of untruthfulness among men that an oath was ever deemed necessary. Oaths would not be here if the kingdom of evil were not in the world. Live without them, he says, for in so far as men are what they ought to be there is no need of them.

This is an absolute imperative, and the prohibition of oaths and swearing seems unmistakable. But it has not generally been taken to be an unconditional prohibition, or if it has, little obedience has followed. It stands written as a command of Jesus, and is freely quoted as such, but it has long been allowed to be a dead letter. With the exception of the people called Friends, and a few besides, Christians do not refuse to swear to testimony that they bear in court, or to take the oath of office or of allegiance to government when it is required of them. Into the oath of allegiance, indeed, the warmest religious sentiment sometimes goes. How is this? Are the followers of Jesus in agelong disobedience to a command that he meant for them all? or may we say that this is something else than a rule?

We have some instructive facts that bear on the scope of the command. If we may trust the record

in the First Gospel, Jesus himself responded to an oath. In his trial he stood silent before the Jewish court under false testimony, but when the high-priest said, "I swear thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ," he made answer. In the apostolic church there appears to have been no general understanding that oaths were forbidden to Christians. It is true that in the Epistle of James we have the prohibition repeated in the Master's words, though not quoted from him. But Paul was not restrained from the use of oaths. Twice he is recorded to have taken regular vows of religious service under the Jewish law, once at the instigation of James, the head of the church at Jerusalem. In his letters he was not always content with the simple Yes and No, but at various times vigorously called God to witness to the truth of his words: "Behold, before God, I lie not." Evidently swearing was not regarded as something that loyalty to Christ forbade. Neither by his prohibition nor by his reason for it was the use of oaths abolished, and this same condition has prevailed from then till now.

Thus from the earliest times to the latest the general Christian practice has violated a plain command of Jesus, and yet the Christian people do not feel themselves very much to blame. Is this unbelief and treason, or is there some other fact in the case? What has Christendom to say for itself? How would it defend itself before its Lord? Christendom would probably stand up for the oath, not as the best thing, but as a good. Apparently the general conscience is

satisfied that in the world, as it has gone, the governmental oath has been expressive of a sound moral and religious motive, and has been on the whole a benefit. It has been sincerely intended for a safeguard to truthfulness and a protection to the highest interests of society. Probably in its history as a whole it has served the cause of righteousness. The Christian practice implies a permanent conviction that if Jesus were speaking here and now, or were legislating for all time, he would not forbid the oath of allegiance to government, or of fidelity in office, or of confirmation to evidence. The practice of Christendom implies the belief that this absolute prohibition was not designed to go beyond the conditions in which it was uttered.

Nevertheless it is certain that the reason that Jesus gave for saying "Swear not at all" is permanently good. A man's word ought to be so trustworthy that appeal to God in support of it was needless. Yes and No ought to be enough, and whatsoever is more cometh of evil, just as he said. Oaths exist because men will lie. That is to say, the sound reason that Jesus gave against the use of oaths is a part of his own ideal. His ideal man is a truthful man, whose word needs no confirmation. His ideal society would have no oaths, because all had such well-grounded confidence in one another as to feel no need of them. And yet his ideal man is a man who can judge for himself, and in doubtful circumstances know how to help the ideal cause. And it is certain that the ideal of Jesus against the oath is

slowly gaining force in that Christendom which has disregarded the plain prohibition. The oath is not regarded as the ideal thing, but as an imperfect help to the good cause. If a Christian takes an oath, he joins society in the endeavor to guard against untruthfulness, but by what he knows to be an unideal means. He may feel this when he performs the act, and be aware that the oath is something beneath the high requirement of the Christian character. Yet since society seems safer with this imperfect protection in use, he yields his scruple and joins in its endeavor at self-protection, and thinks that his Master would wish him so to do. He may thus be serving the Master's own ideal in the end.

It is no small question that arises when we look at the imperatives of Jesus. There are about fifty words in the imperative mood in the Sermon on the Mount. There are many elsewhere, and frequently the imperative tone sounds where the form of speech is different. Reverence often says that every imperative word of Jesus voices a command, and a command of Jesus is for all time and must be literally obeyed. We have no right to inquire whether his commands are limited in any way, or altered by possessing a figurative quality. There they stand, and we have only to obey them. But reverence may well take another turn, and ask what right we have to omit any reasonable means of ascertaining what the words of Jesus really mean. Why should we make our own assumption final? Why assume that

all his imperatives were intended to give us unchangeable rules of action? Other speakers use language variously, and why not he as well? How can we affirm that he spoke no words that belonged to his own time alone, or that he was never figurative in his speech except when he called himself so? Why should we ignore the poetic temperament of the orient in which he lived and spoke, and the hard, prosaic temperament of the occident, which we bring to the interpretation of his words? And how can we forget that back of all interpretations of single sayings must lie the large principles that determine the general method of his teaching?

The general method of his teaching must explain for us many of these imperatives; and we know what the method was. It was that of the giver of a great ideal, who will guide men not by rules but by principles. The principle for us in the present matter is that we must read his imperative words in the light of their relation to the ideal which he is setting forth. If we do this, we shall find that they may serve his ideal not in any single way, but in many ways. His commands may be literal or figurative, temporary or everlasting, and each may make its own contribution to his purpose. Often we have no difficulty in classing them. If we hear him say, "Pray to thy Father who is in secret," we perceive at once that he is enforcing his ideal directly, and means nothing other than what he says. It is otherwise if we hear him say, "If thy right hand make thee sin, cut it off: if thy right eye, pluck it out and cast it from thee."

Regarded as a rule, this is squarely against his ideal; but as illustrating a principle, it serves the ideal perfectly. Jesus could not mean that the forfeiting of a hand or an eye would save a man from sinning. Self-mutilation would be futile; but spiritual self-pruning, the spirit that would sacrifice anything as indispensable as hand or eye for purity, is a grace of his ideal man.

These two instances illuminate the main point. Jesus was throwing his ideal out into the circle of humanity, to be welcomed by men and made their own. Interpreters have often credited him with just one method of doing this, the method of plain command; but when we discern what an ideal is, we shall know that there are many other methods. In giving his ideal to men he would tell them to do things that all true souls must do forever; he might also tell them to do things that were appropriate only to the conditions in which he spoke; and he would doubtless sometimes command eternal duty in temporary forms, which would drop away after a time and leave the duty to be done in some other way. All these ways would be natural to him, and even necessary; and in studying what we have received from his lips it is for us to judge how any one of his imperatives is to be classified. Instead of being irreverent for us to pass this judgment, reverence requires it, since without it we cannot do justice to his words.

Is it implied in this that some of the counsels and commands of Jesus, in the form in which they stand, are not of permanent and universal force? Cer-

tainly; and it is implied also that he might have commanded differently under different conditions. Any teacher would do that, and any wise master of men. In other conditions his great principles would necessarily have found other forms of expression. All readers know that his teaching was moulded, in form and in substance, too, somewhat, by the Jewish life in which it had its being. In Rome or India his utterance of truth would have been cast in other moulds, and so it would if it were given forth in America to-day. In modes of thought, in illustrations and in practical adaptation, his teaching would have been different in any other land from what it was in Palestine, and in any other age from what it was in the first century. What he would have said if he had been born into modern conditions we cannot closely guess, but two things we know: he would have held forth the same ideal of life, and he would have illustrated and enforced it in a manner intelligible and effective in the time and place where it was to be applied. His ideal of life is the same yesterday and to-day and forever; therefore it may be illustrated and applied in a thousand ways, and give birth to a thousand modes of life. This we must always remember in seeking to understand his words.

This is the sum of the matter, that Jesus wished to make God's will man's own. He would send out disciples who through communion with the Father had received the impress of his nature, and were inspired from within by the principles that ought to

govern life. He would not prefer that men should do right because he told them: he wanted men who would do right without being told. The genuine Christian aim has always been this, and the Christly element in the Christian is not so much the mind that follows directions as the heart that directs itself in the Christly way.

If we attempt to follow Jesus in this spirit, we shall know him as a larger, wiser, and more exacting Master, in proportion as we appreciate this character in his work. It is a mistake to think that this view of him makes him an easier Master to obey, and takes away something from the seriousness of life. It is far easier to obey rules than principles. To be loyal to an inspiration of holiness requires more discernment and moral sense, more courage and devotion, more character and force, more of the gift of God and the best in man, than any other ideal of life. Paul is a more exacting prophet than Moses, and Jesus than either of them. It is a mistake, too, to imagine that this view of Jesus is something new, appearing as an innovation. It is the ancient heart of living Christianity. It is true that Christianity has often been conceived as a law, and the teaching of Christ as legislation. The spirit of legalism, so native to humanity, has not deserted the field of Christ. Yet the progress of Christianity has not consisted in the establishment of rules and methods, but rather in the unfolding of principles and the entrance of inspirations that make them alive. This is not only Jesus' ideal of his work; it is the ideal upon which his church, half consciously

and half instinctively, has proceeded in all the ages of its life. It is not the old covenant, with law written outside, but the new, with law written upon the heart, that dominates the true Christendom.

III

THE PICTURE OF THE HIGH AIM

I WISH to bring out various qualities that enter into the ideal of Jesus; but in leading on toward this exposition I am moved to introduce the study exactly as his actual ministry was introduced, by an illustration of the ideal that we are seeking to discern. He himself is the great illustration, and we shall be richer and wiser for our purpose if we first look at him in a pair of scenes that show us the spirit that made his life what it was. There is no better illustration of the vital manner in which his high truth was conveyed from him to his first disciples, nor a more instructive one for us at this far distance. I have named it the Picture of the High Aim. The method of it brings home to us the fact, most important for our purpose, that we are to learn of no professional teacher. We are coming to an actual Person, who does not always set himself to teach, but lives his lessons in our sight. His life breathes upon us the spirit of holy instruction. To be a pupil to him is not only to listen; it is also to look, to feel our way into the spirit of what he said and did, to understand his life. In himself his ideal stands before us.

We meet the Master in the company of his disciples at a crisis of his ministry. The popular favor

that he had enjoyed was passing, and he felt it necessary to prepare for the dark end which he foresaw. Therefore he took his disciples apart in a quiet place, and subjected them to the questioning that would be most helpful to them. He began by asking, "Who do the people say that I am?" He obtained answers, but they were not of any deep significance: the people had not taken him very seriously, or put any important estimate upon him. Then he turned upon his friends themselves, with the demand, "But who say ye that I am?" and in answer there came from Peter the confession, "Thou art the Christ." To this declaration Jesus responded with the warmest congratulation for Peter: he had discerned a fact that required such insight as God alone could give: it was the Father's revelation, and nothing less, that had opened to him this truth. But after this confession had been made, the turn of the Master's thought and teaching was not at all such as the disciples must have expected. When his Messiahship was thus an acknowledged thing, they would look eagerly for signs of power, and expect instruction about the coming victory; but from that time Jesus began to tell them that he must die. The inspired confession became thus the prelude to sorrowful tidings, which of course they could not understand, or even take in as true, so different from all this was their conception of the Messiah's destiny.

In his incredulity, Peter, who had been congratulated upon receiving the great confession as a gift of God, began to protest. "Mercy on thee, Lord," he

cried, "this shall never happen to thee." Then instantly there came from Jesus a rebuke as terrible as the congratulation had been splendid: "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art my stumbling-block; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." And then followed the declaration that one who proposed to follow Jesus must not consider himself; he must accept the burden that God laid upon him, and hold to his purpose, even bearing his cross. "The things of God" which Peter was ignoring were the high aim, devotion to a cause, courage, self-forgetfulness, the steady consecration, the purpose immovable. "The things of men" above which he could not rise were the lower aim, the worldly standard of judgment and desire, self-consideration, fear, shrinking from the cost of high moral endeavor, timid avoidance of the noble strife. In his misplaced sympathy he would even persuade Jesus to hold himself back from sacrifice for his great purpose. Therefore he must be rebuked. Jesus must go straight on unmoved, and his followers must be taught to be followers indeed, never frightened away from the high aim, faithful unto death. As the Master, so must the disciple be: as goes the Leader, so must go the follower, undeterred by this world's hope or fear, unchangeable in the purpose of the holy kingdom.

Jesus had called Peter Satan—a terrible thing to do. He had called him Satan not because of any general depravity in his character or conduct, but on account of one single position that Peter had

taken on that day. "Thou art my stumbling-block," was the explanation of it; that is to say, "You are making it hard for me, you are blocking the road that I am bound to take." Peter was a tempter to him and as a tempter he ordered Peter away. Here surely was a terrible crisis in the little circle of friends. The Master had condemned his chief disciple in the strongest possible terms, on the ground of grave personal fault in relation with himself. This he had done after pronouncing the same disciple highly blessed of God. It was enough to shatter the peace of the company—enough, one would almost think, to shatter the company itself into fragments.

It is reasonable to think that when Jesus had been compelled to do so terrible a thing among his nearest friends, he was quick to explain why it had been necessary. We can scarcely conceive of the faithful Master that he was as doing otherwise. For the sake of every man among them, as well as for the satisfaction of his own heart, it was important that explanation should be made; and it was not difficult to make. So I think it probable that this is the point in his intercourse with his disciples at which he told them the story of the Temptation that he encountered at the beginning of his ministry. Of course he must have told it to them at some time. If a great introductory struggle occurred when he was alone in the wilderness, any knowledge that they might have of it must have been derived from him. We cannot believe that the story of the Temptation that we read

in the Gospels is an invention, and if it was true plainly it must have been told by himself, since his disciples would have no other means of obtaining it. And though no one can prove that this was the moment at which it was told, it certainly appears to have been the moment in their fellowship at which it would most naturally come in. The story fits the occasion perfectly, for it shows why Jesus called his disciple by the dreadful name, and nothing else could explain it so well. Jesus called Peter Satan because Peter had renewed the temptation that he had met and conquered at the beginning of his ministry.

It is a fine contribution to our spiritual wealth that we can receive the narrative of the Temptation in the wilderness as a part of the actual oral teaching of Jesus himself. The reason for so regarding it is so plain as to preclude all doubt, and yet most readers do not seem to have taken to heart the fact that this is one of his own utterances. Whether we think of ethics or of religion, or of both combined, the passage contains fine instruction. The ideal here shines before us. It is something to be thankful for if we can take this instruction as given directly by Jesus himself, out of his own experience. As to the manner in which the story is told, we are certain that it is not literal at all points. We may be sure that he put the experience into such form, in telling it, that his friends could see the vital meaning of it. Doubtless there is something of the parabolic in the mode of telling, but no one can know just how much. The lesson for the sake of which he made this con-

fession of experience to them is plain, and we shall waste time if we search beyond it, seeking to understand very much more.

The temptation that met Jesus at the beginning of his ministry was neither more nor less than the proposal that he should lower his high aim, abandon his ideal, and mind the things of men instead of the things of God. The three temptations have often been interpreted as having to do with the personal relation of Jesus to his Father, and significant in connection with what we now call personal religious experience: they all concerned his own soul. But interpreters now more commonly judge, and more wisely too, I think, that the whole suggestion related to the method and principles that he should act upon in his work among men, then just opening. Of course the two forms of experience would coincide more deeply than they would differ, and yet the difference between them is important. If the more modern view is right, the temptation fell in not only with the general conditions of his life, but with the special ones of the hour. In actual significance it seems to have been not so much the temptation of a son of God—that is, of any child living with the heavenly Father—as of the Son of God, just owned in baptism and now turning his face toward a work among men in the Father's name. And the suggestion in its three forms was exactly that of Peter at a later date, namely, that the Son of God should abandon the true ideal of life and undertake to do his work in easier and less worthy ways, shaping his

course to suit his own comfort or popularity, serving good ends by bad means, minding the things of men and not the things of God.

The first temptation found Jesus hungry in the wilderness, and suggested to him that he need not be hungry, since he was the Son of God. Many readers have thought that by the "if" he was tempted to doubt his Sonship, and put it to the test of miracle-working to prove it; but in the Greek this is an impossible meaning. "If thou art the Son of God, as thou art, command that these stones become bread." The hunger was real, and so was the appeal to it, and yet we are right if we feel that in the temptation something more was meant than was said. The satisfaction of one day's bodily hunger can scarcely have been all that was proposed, for that would have been too small a matter for the occasion. It is incredible that for such a spirit as Jesus hunger alone brought on one of the supreme temptations of his life. The hunger stands as a representative fact, and the temptation that it suggested was, "Use thy power for thyself." The sense of a great calling among men was upon him. The tidings, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," had been followed by the voice from heaven sounding in his soul and testifying, "Thou art my beloved Son." There is mystery in this for us, and we cannot see what was passing through his mind, but it is plain that a calling had reached him, a summons to a great leadership among men. Since he was the Son of God, great power

must be his, and in his needs he could serve himself. Others might serve him too. The kings of the earth were expected to profit by the power that they possessed. "The kings of the Gentiles are called their great ones," and the lesser ones are supposed to be at their service. So the suggestion was, in its broader meaning, "Be served: be ministered unto: be as the one that sitteth at meat. Here in the wilderness, where you are hungry, let the powers of the heavenly kingdom wait upon your needs; and so throughout your life be the recipient. For God's Son surely it is more fitting, and therefore more blessed, to receive than to give."

But the appeal to self-interest was made in vain. Jesus perceived that such an attitude meant unbelief in God, and abandonment of the due dependence upon him. "Man shall not live by bread alone," he answered, quoting from the ancient testimony about the feeding of Israel in the wilderness, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Men are in God's hands, and must be satisfied with his appointments. If we understand Jesus to have cited the passage from Deuteronomy in the spirit of its meaning in old time, he meant, "If God says I am to be fed I shall be fed, while I look to him. Bread is not all that I want—I must have my bread from him, and as his gift. All is for him to determine. I will submit myself to his providence, not claim to set myself above it. My powers shall serve God's kingdom, not myself, and I will not demand to be treated as a recipient." Not for satisfaction of

his own necessities would he change his attitude toward God. Not for his own advantage would he lower the high aim and abandon his ideal.

The first temptation had related to himself, and his own relation to his work. The second had reference to his own people of Israel, and the manner in which he should seek their favor. Here I follow the order of Matthew, which is more climactic than that of Luke, and seems more natural: though if we think of the ideas as surging in his mind in a real experience, it does not matter much which we think of as coming first. Probably they all recurred again and again in the struggle, and were all united sometimes in one great assault.

The first temptation had found Jesus hungry; the second placed him in thought upon the pinnacle of his Father's temple in Jerusalem. Of course there was no need that he make a journey thither, or be carried thither through the air, as we used to think in childhood, imagining that we must be literal. Imagination placed him there, and that was enough. The mission of God's Son would be expected to centre in his Father's temple. There the people of Israel were always present, often thronging. When the kingdom came, they hoped to see it inaugurated with mighty signs. Superhuman power was the kind of evidence of God for which they looked. If the Son of God were to cast himself down in their presence from the height of the temple, and be borne in safety to the ground, that would be enough for

them—they would see and believe. And had not God himself anticipated that very act in the promise which the Scriptures recorded? "He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Jesus wanted followers from among a people who expected to yield to just such evidence as this. Must not one who seeks a following consider what will appeal to those whom he wishes to win? And shall he not take advantage of God's own promise? "Instead of insisting so strenuously upon the high aim, aim where you can hit. Make appeals that the people of Israel, looking for the kingdom of God, will respond to. Appear in your Father's house, accept his written promise, trust his word, and win the multitude by a mighty miracle, not of power only but of faith. Surely your Father will be pleased with this, and the people too."

But in vain again. The clear vision of Jesus perceived that such an act would not lie within the range of the divine purpose and promise, or within the field of his own right relation with the Father. Not for such uses was the promise given, and not for such help had he a right to call. So his loyal answer was, "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, put him to needless tests, play with him as it were, call upon him to do for thee inferior things of thine own devising. Trust him, but trust him within the field of his own character, and of his characteristic work. That is enough, and beyond that I will not go." True, the people of Israel might be gained

in such a way, some of them: they might be gained to some kind of leadership: but Jesus would not seek them thus, and would not offer them a leadership that could be thus accepted. He would seek them only in ways in which he had a spiritual right to invoke his Father's help. Not for followers would he change his attitude toward God. Not for popularity would he lower the high aim and abandon the ideal.

The third temptation took hold upon the relation of Jesus to the world. Israel was not the whole of humanity: round about it stood the nations, and of them Jesus thought. Of course there is no mountain from which one could see all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; but an eager mind has no need of such a point of vision. Has the kingdom of God any chance among these powers? The power of evil is ready with its suggestion. It claims to be the dominant force in world affairs, and is able to quote history in confirmation. It affirms that the great world powers have not come to their greatness without much of its friendly aid. So to Jesus, to whose mind came visions of the kingdoms of the world as fields of conquest for God's kingdom, the power of evil whispered, "Make terms with me, and you shall have it all." As the world goes, it was a plausible suggestion. What is the hope of an absolutely pure work? How can one expect world-wide influence, except through such means as experience has proved to be effective?—and certainly the shining successes among the nations have owed much to

evil. Is not a great enterprise defeated in advance if it refuses all terms with the evil that so largely rules the world? "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

But the proposal was made to one who had clear discernment of the everlasting moral contrast, and could not be false to its demand. There are only two primary principles, and one of them is identified with God. To Jesus it was not a question. It was now that he said, "Get thee hence, Satan," and his answer was, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." To God and righteousness must sole loyalty be given. Compromise with the evil power that promised so liberally was not for a moment to be thought of. Not for the prospect of vast extension of his influence would he change his attitude toward God. Not for the whole world would he lower the high aim and abandon the ideal.

Thus at the beginning of his life among men Jesus stood fast by his high aim—he would sacrifice anything else, but never that. Again toward the end the temptation is renewed, and he stands in the same virtue. Not that this is anything wonderful for him. A strong soul holds to its standards. When we know him we do not wonder that he was not false, but we admire his steadfastness none the less, and are thankful for such a picture of the ideal. The later scene, like the earlier, shows him as he was. The voice of an enemy sounded from the lips of a friend: his disciple was his stumbling-block, obstruct-

ing the way in which it was his Father's will that he should walk. It was like him to blaze forth upon his chief disciple when he played the tempter's part, and he fulfilled the ideal equally in the act that followed, if he then graciously told Peter and the rest as much as they could understand of his earlier dealing with that same proposal.

The lesson could not be plainer. It could not be half so plain if it were taught in school or dictated in words. An act of firmness excels all exhortations. In Jesus here we behold what God desires every man to be. He had the high aim so thoroughly for his own that it was impossible for him to be false to it. This is our Father's standard for us all.

It is worth while to notice at how many points this example touches our life, and illustrates the ideal that it commends to us. It is evident that the whole transaction of the wilderness moves in the sphere of religion. The first necessity is that the soul of Jesus hold fast the fellowship of the Father. He must not go spiritually away from home: he must do the will of God with a free and joyful choice, and thus abide in the secret of his presence. His action under temptation illustrates the effect of the religious impulse, holding fast to God. And it is needless to say that the scene illustrates just as clearly the ideal work in the field of ethics. The choice lay between right and wrong, and the unqualified choosing of the right is what makes the scene glorious. Plainly, too, it illustrates the personal life, the call of individual duty, the ideal personal attitude. "As for me," says

Jesus, "as for me, this is the only way, and here I stand." But no less clearly does the scene illustrate life in its social aspect and the ideal attitude of the individual in social relations. The great question at issue was how Jesus should serve his fellows, and his decision was that he would serve his fellows by holding high his standard of life, by forgetting himself, and by being utterly loyal to his God and theirs. "As for you, O my brothers," says Jesus, in effect, "I will serve you in the way that blesses you most richly," and self did not come into the reckoning. So here we find expressed the ideal in religion and in ethics, in personal and in social forms. The lesson touches all life.

We may put the general lesson in a negative form that is quite intelligible, if we say that Jesus does not stand for compromise. Doubtless there are matters in which compromise is right, and it very often seems to be entirely unavoidable in such a world as this. Jesus is the very soul of kindliness and patience toward those who are but partly trained in virtue and have not yet attained to sound consistency: he would never make the present day's requirement so severe as to render a reasonable obedience impossible, and he would never condemn a compromise that did not trifle with the most important things. But for himself, in dealing directly with the great issues of life, as in the scene before us, he knows only one way. There is only one Master, and he knows no compromise when his requirement is involved: there is only

one principle of life, and he accepts no compromise in applying it to himself. This standard of unswerving loyalty to God and duty, which he illustrates in himself, he holds out as the true standard for all. This quality must be characteristic of any religion that is entitled to bear his name. It cannot be exhibited in perfection, but any religion that is of Jesus must be at heart a firm religion, with its presumption always against temporizing with evil. It may be said that such straightforwardness is only the common duty of man, and this is true; but then, the Christian ideal is only the genuine human ideal, taken as the aim in a religion of saving power.

When we look at the influence of Jesus, and the view that is generally taken of him, it is interesting to note the effect of this quality. The world is not averse to compromise, but rather looks graciously upon it, as a thing wholly inevitable, and not too much to be blamed even when it cannot be altogether approved. Many think even better of it, and count it a valuable principle in life. Conscience may often bear testimony against it, but there are powerful voices that warn conscience not to be too urgent against so indispensable a thing. Sometimes, we must own, much that may be counted under the name of compromise serves a Christian purpose, by way of forbearance and helpfulness toward a weaker brother. Nevertheless, after all has been said, the fact remains that the world thinks better of Jesus for not having compromised. Probably no reader of the Gospels has ever wished that he had in some

way made terms with the power of evil when it would have helped him toward popularity or saved him from suffering. Even the easy-going and much-compromising world likes him better for it that he would not compromise. Any reader must shudder to think how the later history of the world would have been altered if Jesus had consented to lower his high aim and abandon his ideal, at the solicitation of friend or foe. Regarded as a person in history and an example of sound living, this is one great means of his lasting power upon humanity, that with uncompromising singleness of aim he held his course. And this element of unyielding simplicity and straightforwardness gives tone to all his teaching and influence in ethics and religion.

IV

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In seeking to understand the ideal of Jesus we must make sure that we understand the Kingdom of God, or, as the First Gospel calls it, the Kingdom of Heaven. It was often upon his lips. He found the hope of the kingdom as the supreme social and religious expectation of Israel, and adopted this national hope as the mould in which his own proclamation of the coming good should be cast. He took the conception for his own, and used this ideal of his nation for the representation of his own ideal. So prominent is the kingdom of God in his discourse, that interpreters have come to feel that it is the very first thing to be interpreted, if we are to understand what Jesus stands for in the world. In this they are right. The kingdom of God is the embodiment of the ideal of Jesus.

How the idea of the kingdom of God came to be so prominent, and yet why in some respects it is so far from clear in meaning, it is easy to understand. Out of the past the idea had come down to the time of Jesus. In the memory and imagination of the people, the ideal Israel of the past was the kingdom of David and his descendants; and in forms derived from that kingdom the prophetic anticipation had

long pictured the ideal Israel of the future. It is no wonder that the Israel of the future was conceived as a kingdom, in which the ancient glory was to be renewed, and the national hopes of virtue, prosperity, and power were to be fulfilled in the light of the divine presence. This was only a natural transmutation of sacred memory into sacred hope: it was a description of the promised blessing in terms of the brightest experience. Of old it had been hoped that the kingdom of David itself might develop into a kingdom in which the coming good should be embodied; but after unsatisfactory centuries that kingdom had vanished away. After it had gone the hope sprang up that it would be restored, and that new kings of David's line, reigning over Israel, would bring in the expected day of glory; but this hope also came to no fruition. In Jesus' time it still lived in a fragmentary way, though almost as a hope of desperation, for the shadow of the Roman empire was upon it, and only through rebellion could it be fulfilled; and rebellion was hopeless. Yet the hope of the kingdom could not perish, and in despair it took another form. When earthly institutions did not fulfil their promise and their possibilities were all destroyed, it began to be expected that the coming kingdom would be brought in not from earth but from heaven. The natural kingdom failing, a supernatural one would appear. God would introduce it by matchless signs from heaven, raising the dead, judging the nations, vindicating his people, and establishing Israel in righteousness and glory

under his own dominion. Both in the earlier form and in this later eschatological one the hope of the kingdom was current in the days of Jesus. The former was grounded in history, prophecy, and traditional expectation, while about the latter there had grown up a mass of apocalyptic literature, mightily inspiring to the popular heart.

Thus in the first century the ancient phrase had virtually two meanings, the later and more passionate expectation being probably the more influential. One hope inspired both, and in both forms it was a hope in God, the God of the fathers, who was to interpose and save his people Israel. In both forms it was a national hope, which is much the same that we mean by a social hope. It was a hope for the common life of men, a hope for the many, and for the life that they lived together. These important elements the two forms of the hope had in common; and yet in spirit, tone, and practical effect the difference between them was very great. The result is that the phrase kingdom of God, standing by itself in the speech of that period, does not altogether explain itself. For example, when John the Baptist declared, "The kingdom of God is at hand," we cannot tell from the language whether he thought that a descendant of David would soon reestablish the throne of his fathers in Israel, or that by a miraculous manifestation from heaven the new age would be inaugurated and the reign of God brought in. Nor does the phrase upon the lips of Jesus contain the key to its own meaning, as between these two.

The Jewish people have been greatly blamed by Christians for setting their hearts on an earthly kingdom, a national institution, a carnal kingdom as we have been wont to call it. They ought, we are sure, to have been more spiritual. Yet we may easily blame them too much. This hope was a hope in God, and it bore the form which the providence of God had made most natural. The glory and charm of their national history lay in an earthly kingdom. No doubt they idealized it, but the glory was real to them, and stood as a sign of God's own blessing. Prophets had long ago pointed them to the throne and family of David as the pledge and hope of the great future that God had in store for Israel. It is no wonder that they expected God's crowning gift to come through the restoration of the kingdom in which their ancient greatness stood. The persistency of this hope, notwithstanding all its faults, was due to a living faith in God. And even more perhaps was it a result of faith that the hope of the kingdom took on its later eschatological form. This more brilliant hope sprang up in the darkness—nay, it sprang up just because it was so hopelessly dark. Not only had David's line ceased from reigning and become mingled with the common multitude, but it had come to pass that a throne for David's Son to sit upon was an utter impossibility. Over a dependency of the Roman empire like Israel, no king could hold such a sovereignty as the hope affirmed. But in this deep darkness faith rose undiscouraged, to declare that God would not forget his promise or

forsake his people. If the earthly kingdom could not come, a heavenly kingdom could, and would. If natural means did not bring the Son of David to the king's seat in triumph, supernatural means would serve God's purpose, and glories such as the natural Jerusalem could not know would shine forth when the kingdom of God was manifested from heaven with power.

I have said that students of the Gospels feel it important to know just what Jesus meant by the kingdom of God; and in consequence they inquire very carefully as to the precise sense in which he used this phrase of history and hope. This is more decidedly the case in recent times, since there came to be a better knowledge of the two forms of the hope current side by side in his day, and often flowing in a mingled stream. Much labor has gone into the inquiry whether he held the hope of the kingdom in the historical form, or in the apocalyptic; whether he looked for the ancient throne to be restored, or for glory to be flashed from heaven; or whether, yet again, he held the hope in a spiritualized form and counted upon the kingdom as a spiritual fact to be realized in neither of these two ways. Some have felt that the very stability of the Christian faith depends upon his having been right on this question and entertaining no incorrect ideas. Now it is true that a right understanding of Jesus' conception of the kingdom of God is vital to the understanding of Jesus himself, his teaching and his ideal. But it is not true that the vital point for us to decide

is whether he held the apocalyptic or the historical hope. On the surface, that question looks important; but the fact is that in our endeavor to understand him for ourselves, and in our efforts to promote the kingdom in real life, it has now scarcely more than an academic interest. Only by passing beyond it do we come to the important point at all and approach our lesson.

With reference to the kingdom of God, much has happened since the first century, and the question how it should be defined stands very far from where it stood then. We have much new light. The fact is that both forms of the Jewish expectation are matters of the dead past now. The kingdom came, and fulfilled neither of them, and so left them in the background, and showed what it really was.

The kingdom came. When Jesus and his forerunner said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," they spoke the truth. It was at hand, and it came in. That sovereign good which had been meant by the kingdom of God in the divine forecasting of the future did come with Jesus, and enter with him into the history of mankind. This is a fact of the first importance for our understanding of the Master, for if he was right, if the kingdom was really at hand and really came with him, then we have the means of knowing what it was. The facts will answer our search for the kingdom of God. And so we ask, What was it that came?

In answering this question we can say two things

with perfect certainty. One is that if the kingdom was at hand, and came, it was not to be a national kingdom of the Davidic line, as the Jews had hoped from of old. The kingdom is at hand, said Jesus, but there was no setting up of David's throne, nor any sign that such a thing was in contemplation. The hope of kingly restoration was left in the grave in which history had already buried it. And the other thing that we can say is that if the kingdom was at hand, and came, it was not to be an eschatological kingdom, revealed from heaven in apocalyptic glories and terrors, as the Jews were expecting in their later hope. The kingdom is at hand, said Jesus, but there occurred no descent upon the clouds of heaven, no resurrection and day of judgment, no miraculous transformation on earth, no endowment of Jerusalem with supernatural splendors. If the kingdom was at hand, as Jesus said it was, it was something different from either of these. And if we endeavor to say that in either form the expected event was merely postponed, and is yet to occur, we find that the explanation fails to meet the conditions in the case. Immediacy was an essential element in the hope that the New Testament records. All the hopes declared that the kingdom was coming soon, and it was this expectation of an immediate coming that Jesus declared to be correct. If a Davidic king or an apocalyptic kingdom should appear after two thousand years, it would not correspond to the actual hope of Israel, any more than it would to Jesus' confirmation of that hope. We may

stand firmly on the conviction that whatever the kingdom was to be, it came. And in the light of this fact we see that both the Davidic hope and the eschatological hope have been left behind in the course of events. They have been cancelled. They were earnest hopes, but not accurate ones. They represented the best forelook of godly men in their time, but the kingdom, when it came, was something different from either of them. Thus both the Davidic conception and the eschatological conception of the kingdom of God drop out from the true reckoning, to return no more.

What, then, was it that came? In the fact that the expected kingdom came with Jesus, we find three helpful descriptions of it. For one thing, we see that the kingdom that came was a kingdom operative in the conditions of this world. It was not an order created by resuscitation of the past, or by incursion of the invisible future, but an order or method of life here and now, just where we are. We expect it to have a future beyond this life, since the human soul has such a future, and a genuine kingdom of God will naturally be as lasting as the relation between God and men. But the true description of the kingdom has its meaning and application here and now. In present life we are to understand it. If this description of the kingdom is correct, a second is implied, namely, that what we need to learn about the kingdom is not its external form, but its internal character. From the field of external description we are driven by the conditions in which we are studying

into the realm of ethical and religious truth. The kingdom that came in with Jesus was not of this world: it was an unworldly spiritual force. If we wish to compass its meaning we shall inquire what the kingdom of God is designed to be as a dominant force in the actual life of men; what are its motives, its inspirations and aspirations, what its impelling powers; what are the relations on which it takes hold; how it leads men to regard themselves and one another and their God; what are its principles of daily living; in what manner it will inspire men to live together in the common life; what revolutions and reconstructions it will bring to pass in the world if it prevails. These and such as these are the fundamental questions. And one thing more. The kingdom that was brought in with Jesus takes its character from him. If we are questioned about its inmost character, we can say at once that it is the order of life in this present world that corresponds to his teaching and influence. It is the realization of his ideal. Jesus appeared, and uttered his word and fulfilled his career in life and death; and out from him and his work there came forth that order of life, personal and social, in which the ancient expectation of the kingdom of God was to be realized. This order of life was that which was meant in the divine counsel by the kingdom of God. That kingdom had been expected in forms inspiring in their time, but destined to drop away in the fulfilment; but the reign of God was destined to come in a fulness and freedom which the ancient hopes could

never foresee. That which came in Jesus was truly God's kingdom, for Jesus revealed God freshly in his relation to the life of men, and brought men into responsive loyalty to him. Consequently the order of life that he brought in was truly a reign of God. It was that dominion over men to which God is evermore entitled and in which men are blest.

Here we have a threefold description of the kingdom of God. It is an order of life in the present time, its importance resides not in its outward form or mode of manifestation, but in its ethics and religion, and its ethics and religion are such as correspond to the teaching and influence of Jesus. Or, to put the three into one, the kingdom of God is the embodiment of the ideal that Jesus held.

How natural and normal does this make the story of the kingdom! When God placed his Son in the world, the ancient hope of the kingdom was to be fulfilled. The Son of God performed the work of his mission in the world, and left an ideal to be realized and a transforming ethical and religious power to realize it. We look at the result which followed from his work, and are well satisfied to give it the name that the ancient promise had provided, the kingdom of God. It is a good name, for the reign of God over the souls and social life of men is precisely what Jesus suggested and inspired. Moreover, the reigning over men to which God is entitled is exactly the result that came into being as the true fruit of his mission. The work of Jesus among men

had no tendency to produce a restoration of the kingdom of David, neither did it tend to change the divine method in the world to the apocalyptical. If either event had occurred, it would not have been traceable to influence that he had put forth. But not so of the moral and religious reign of God. His mission was visibly adapted to bring to pass just that divine order of life of which we speak. It did bring it to pass, imperfectly indeed, yet really. Straight out from Jesus as a normal and congenial outcome from his work came that ethical and religious order of life which we call the kingdom of God. In this God has followed the order of spiritual nature, bringing forth from the presence of his holy Son among men an order of life that corresponds to his significance — and this is his kingdom. Thanks be to God for the divine directness and simplicity of the method. And let not the imperfectness of the human development and the defectiveness of the result blind our eyes to the nature of the work that Jesus has initiated. The imperfectness was inevitable, but the divine fact is not thereby destroyed.

This view of the matter sends us directly to Jesus for our understanding of the kingdom of God. Since the kingdom is that which corresponds to his inspiration and fulfils his ideal, to him we must turn for knowledge of it. And it is well to remember again that when we come to him our attention is directed entirely away from the old discussions about the form of the kingdom and the time and manner

of its appearing. Nor need we be surprised at any manner belonging to his own time in which we find Jesus speaking of it. He must needs have spoken so as to be understood. He may have spoken of the coming good in terms of any of the expectations that were current in his period. The popular forms were all transient, as we have seen, and it matters very little to us which of them served his purpose best in speaking to his contemporaries. While he spoke he was laying the foundations of the kingdom that actually came. This he did by his moral and spiritual work for men. What we are to listen for, therefore, if we wish to understand the kingdom, is his word about its inner character, its ethical standard, its religious power, its human applications, its revolutionary intent. On such points we must learn of him.

It is indispensable that we approach the study of the kingdom, remembering one thing that Christendom has been prone to forget. The conception of the kingdom of God is a social conception. So it was before Christ, when prophets looked forward and saw the people of a nation living together under new and diviner auspices. The kingdom was to be the divinely ordered social group and life. By Christendom this has not been so much denied as ignored or ill-conceived. Too persistent has been the impression that the kingdom of God is somehow another name for personal religion or for the church. At present, by way of preparation, I simply call attention to the fact that in the kingdom

we must expect to find the fulfilment of the age-long social hope.

We come now to Jesus' account of the kingdom. The ancient name is admirably adapted to represent his ideal, for it implies the great meanings that reside in his view of life. The right to rule is God's. All the significance that Jesus portrays in life takes color from the relation that men hold to God. For him nothing is outside this field. His whole teaching and inspiration have the presence of God for their necessary atmosphere. If it were not for religion his ideal would have no existence. Consequently Jesus' thought of God colors everything that he says about the kingdom. In the kingdom no man lives to himself, nor is anything human the decisive factor. It is God that reigns, and the life of man is a life from God, in God, and for God, whose beneficent will is to be done. So Jesus is winning men to God, and the ideal of the kingdom is that God is all in all—all that God should be, in all persons and all affairs.

When we look to Jesus for special portrayal of the kingdom of God, we might naturally expect to attend only to the sayings in which he speaks of it by name. Our only question might seem to be, What does he say when he is talking about the kingdom? But if the kingdom represents his broad ideal, we are not limited thus. We may learn about the kingdom not merely from what he said of it by name, but from all that he told us of the order of life that he was estab-

lishing. All that he said about the way in which men ought to live—that is, all his teaching in ethics and religion, all his inspiration and his ideal of life —goes to show what he meant by this great term. As his whole work laid the foundations of the kingdom, so his whole utterance of truth shows us what it is.

Nevertheless, we turn first to what he said of the kingdom under that name; and although we are not limited to this field, we find ourselves well taught, even if we were to go no further. But we feel our way through many sayings that are not profoundly decisive to some that are. We discover that in these special utterances he said a good many things descriptive of the kingdom of God in its operation, but not so many as we might expect that give account of the inmost character of the kingdom itself. But some of these few things are entirely decisive, for they show what the living and powerful spirit of the kingdom really is, and so afford the key for the interpretation of the whole.

Look first at the sayings that are more external. For example, he describes the kingdom as precious. Its secret is like treasure hid in a field, to be obtained only by him who is eager and wise enough. It is like a pearl of great price, worthy to be obtained at all costs. Or, he describes the manner of its enlargement. It becomes great from small, in the manner of the mustard-seed, far transcending its apparent promise; it is pervasive, like the leaven, quietly transforming that in which it is placed; it grows, no

man knows how, like the seed in the ground, responsive to unseen forces; it comes unobserved, and "is in the midst of you," even while he speaks. Or, he tells of the imperfectness of its manifestation in the present time. It is like the field in which the tares grow among the wheat, not yet to be relieved of their presence; it is like the net that gathers fish of every kind, good and bad, which have to be separated. Or, he tells how exacting it is. Among those who are expecting it, the first shall be last and the last first; it reminds him of wise and foolish virgins, who respectively seize and miss their opportunity at the wedding feast; it shall be taken away from "the children of the kingdom," if they do not discern its spirit, and many from east and west shall receive its blessings in their stead; publicans and harlots shall enter it before chief priests and elders who are blind to its character. In these sayings and others that resemble them he describes certain relations and workings of the kingdom of God, and presents its various appeals with stirring power, but he does not tell us what it is. In these utterances there is no indication of what it is that constitutes the kingdom of God as its moral and religious principle. If we wish to live our life in the kingdom, he has not yet told us how. What is the inner definition? Obedience to God? Yes, but what obedience? Obedience to what primary moral demand? Is it fellowship with God? but fellowship in what fundamental quality and character? The inner secret has not yet been told us.

There are other sayings that go farther toward the innermost. The Master helps us sometimes by speaking of the possibility or impossibility of entering the kingdom, and in this light we seem almost to see into the heart of the matter. It is desperately hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom—nay, it is humanly impossible, possible at all only because all things are possible to God. Only with a righteousness better than that of scribes and Pharisees can any one enter. Only in the spirit of little children can men come in. Only by a new birth, or a birth from above, is it possible. These sayings come much nearer to the centre of the subject, for from one side or another they all call attention to the spirit or temper that is requisite if one would come into the new life to which Jesus is calling. And yet even these statements are not complete, and the secret has not yet been opened. Wherein the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees is insufficient, what it is in the kingdom of God that a rich man cannot receive, what it is that requires to be received in the spirit of a little child, what indeed is the moral attitude in fellowship with God that constitutes the dominant impulse in the life of the kingdom, what is the test-question and turning-point—these vital questions are not answered in the sayings that have been cited. In their place we shall find these sayings immensely rich in their testimony to the Christian ideal, but they leave us still seeking the determinative principle of the kingdom of God. There must be some central characteristic, around which these various descrip-

tions gather and from which they derive their appropriateness.

There is one of the words just referred to that does not indeed describe the kingdom itself, but does illumine the way in which it must be entered. There are two scenes, each thrice recorded, in which Jesus illustrated entrance to the kingdom by reference to a little child. On one occasion his disciples were disputing as to which of them was, or was to be, the greatest in his kingdom. On the other, little children—babes—were brought to him to receive his blessing. We cannot be sure that we have his very words in either case, for the records differ in their way of combining the sayings in which substantially a single thought is expressed; but in them all we catch the tone of the Master's voice most distinctly, and have no difficulty in perceiving his point. The utterances, variously grouped in the different Gospels, are these: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such is," or to such belongeth, "the kingdom of heaven." "Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." "Whosoever shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of God." "Whosoever shall receive this little child in my name receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me receiveth him that sent me; for he that is least among you, the same is great." "If any man would be

first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all." All these are variant forms of one idea, and the meaning of the symbolism is plain. The sayings might all be a commentary upon the beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It is the childlike who enter. To be without self-importance, to be humble, simple-minded, trustful, receptive, to be content with lowliness and let all else be great—this is the spirit for which the kingdom is prepared.

Doubtless there may be other true descriptions of the spirit that can enter the kingdom, but this is one that the Lord has given us. It is a searching word. It is a natural thing for little children to be suggestive of all this spiritual beauty, and it requires neither grace nor effort on their part. But the Master was not addressing little children; he was speaking to grown men and women, and to such the kingdom in all ages brings its appeal. It is one thing to be little children, but to become as little children after having grown away from the childlike temper, to "turn," and take on this spirit so unlike all that maturity acquires and glories in, this is quite another thing. This is a change at which human ability stumbles. If it were not that the kingdom is God's own and he is almighty and gracious, no man could enter it. Yet this is what the kingdom means. Men do not enter it with heads high, as if they were doing it all themselves and were to receive the glory of it. Their hearts bow in humility as they receive the gift of God and begin to live the life of his kingdom.

This simplicity and spiritual receptiveness is appreciated again with a full heart when Jesus says, rejoicing in what God has done for those who came to him, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and intelligent, and hast revealed them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." This was the way of the divine wisdom, as experience was proving. Eyes that are less used to the dazzling light of this world are shown to have better vision for the realities that are revealed by God, and Jesus rejoices in the honor that his Father has thus put upon the simple heart. Not that he would fail in welcome to the wise and intelligent, or withhold from them his appeals, or count them unworthy of the kingdom. Them also he would call, and bring. But it is not as wise and intelligent that they will find the kingdom open to them. When they add to their wisdom a childlike simplicity of heart, the kingdom is theirs.

It is not true that in thus honoring the simple and childlike soul Jesus puts honor upon meanness of spirit, or in any manner promises the kingdom only to those who from a manly point of view are least worthy of it. This is sometimes alleged against Christianity; but in the name of God and man Christians ought to reject the accusation and disprove it. That which Jesus meant by the childlike spirit is beautiful in a child, indeed, but not so beautiful as it is elsewhere. Simplicity and humility are far more beautiful in a great soul capable of the largest

things. Humility, the opposite of self-importance, openness of heart to that which is greater, receptiveness, sweet co-ordination with powers above, adaptation to humble work—these are qualities that belong to all high character, and are more beautiful than anywhere else when they are worn as the garment of grace upon splendid powers.

From this view of the spirit that enters the kingdom we may proceed to another utterance of Jesus, in which he has gone beyond all externals and all preparatory stages, and proclaimed the inner working principle that makes the kingdom what it is.

The lesson is one of those that gain in impressiveness by coming in perfect simplicity out of real life. The principle is laid down by the Master in answer to a definite request. Two of his disciples, James and his brother John, with their mother according to one report, approach Jesus privately and ask him to promise them seats at his right hand and his left, the seats of highest honor, in his kingdom when he comes into it. In answering so ambitious a request he warns them that they have no idea of what they are asking for, and asks them in turn whether they are able to drink the cup that it will be necessary for him to drink, and undergo the deep consecration of suffering that he will have to endure on his way to the throne of the kingdom. As they knew not what they asked, so now they know not what they answer, but they say, "We are able," full of the self-confidence of an ignorant mind. Then he tells them that

they shall indeed drink of the cup and partake in the baptism of suffering, but that that cannot insure to them the seats that they are asking for. Who will have seats at his right and left in his kingdom cannot be told beforehand. They are not to be assigned by him, and he can only say that those for whom the seats are prepared will come to them. Of course this means that those for whom the seats are prepared will prove to be the same as those who are prepared to take possession of the seats. Their own will come to them, and they will come to their own; those who can take the seats, being fit, will take them by virtue of their fitness. And when he mentions the sharing of the cup and the baptism that are appointed to the king himself, it is implied that the men who go to the kingdom closest to the king will be the ones to sit at his right hand and his left. Whether James and John will sit nearest to the king will depend upon how well they follow the king in living out the spirit of the kingdom. The two disciples may have been surprised at the dropping of all favoritism that was involved in this, but if they reflected seriously they could not be offended at what they were told. The terms were certainly reasonable and self-commending. No one could have a right to ask a more definite assurance than this, which was, in effect, "You will have the highest seats in the kingdom if you take possession of them by the highest fulfilment of the spirit of the kingdom."

Yet exactly by what means the highest seats in the kingdom are to be taken is not yet apparent, but to

this Jesus now turns. The two disciples have been unblushingly ambitious in their request, and the other ten, when they hear of it, are scandalized at such ambition, and indignant—not perhaps because the ten are really less ambitious, so much as because the two have put in a first claim. Thereupon Jesus summons them all into his presence, and tells them where they have been wrong, and offers them the true idea in place of the false. The whole matter has been conceived after the manner of this world. James and John have thought of the seats nearest to the king as honors that the king confers, and that bring elevation and compliment to the recipients of his gift. But this whole idea Jesus bids them banish. He reminds them that in this world greatness is supposed to be identified with authority, power, exaltation, dominion, visible superiority. Whenever a man is great he seems great and feels great. This idea of greatness has been in all their minds, and has misled them. "But," he says, "it is not so among you"—a great and decisive word. In his kingdom in which they are seeking to be promoted, greatness is not of the same kind as in the kingdoms of this world. All goes on another principle. Here, he who is to be great must be the servant, and he who is to be greatest must be servant beyond all the rest. Service, or rather the spirit that will render service, is the test. The higher the destination, the lowlier the way by which one must come to it. This is the method of this kingdom. It is a kingdom of mutual help, and this is the law of it.

That this must be the method of the kingdom Jesus makes plain by reminding them that this is the method of the king. "For the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister"—not to be served but to be a servant—"and to give his life a ransom for many." As he said at another time, "Which is greater, he that sits at the table, or he that waits on the table? But I am among you as he that waits on the table." The Son of man, who was to be the king, held not himself at his own disposal, and sought no exaltation, but made himself a servant ministering to men, even to the giving of his life in their behalf, a ransom to deliver them from the captivity of sin, in which they could never rise to the spirit of the kingdom. By this complete devotion of himself to others whom he can bless, he has set the type for his kingdom and for all its life. Since the king is supreme in devotion for others' good, this is the keynote for all who belong to his kingdom. One who is to sit near the throne must take the same path with him who has gone before to sit upon the throne, and must closely follow him. He who best does the work in which the king is leader, the work of a servant to those whom he can bless, thereby sits down nearest to his Lord.

This is a new doctrine to the disciples regarding the way to the highest places in the kingdom, but it is more than that. It is a most surprising doctrine concerning the nature of those places, and concerning the character of the kingdom itself. James and John must be taught better than to think of seats at

the Lord's right and left as honors conferred. According to the spirit of this teaching, they are not to be conceived as honors at all. The whole idea of visible greatness and exaltation as a reward must be dropped from the conception of the kingdom of God. It does not belong there. Human self-esteem may set its heart upon a comfortable compensating glory as a reward for service rendered to the king, but it is wrong. The Master says, "It shall not be so among you." He who is seated at the Lord's right hand is not there to be congratulated upon his work or admired for the virtue that has brought him thither. His high place is not something that has been assigned to him in reward for what he has done. More amazing is the doctrine: he has taken it in the doing. In the very act of serving, the seat near the Lord has been taken—yes, in the lowly act itself. The doing of the service that is likest to the Lord sets a man nearest to the Lord in his kingdom. Nothing else can place him there, but this can and does. And the surprise goes farther yet. It follows that the man who is seated next to the Lord is not likely to suspect that he is there, and that none of his fellows may know anything about it. Nevertheless, in being the completest servant except One, he has taken the place in the kingdom next to the One, and the Lord will see him there, though no one else may know. And if he was displaced by a better servant tomorrow he would neither know it nor be jealous if he knew.

It is to be remembered also that the kingdom of

which Jesus here speaks is not located in a distant heaven or coming in some future age. The kingdom of God came with Jesus, and is a living kingdom in this present world. The throne of the supreme Servant-King has already been set up, and the places at his right and left are already in existence. The unconscious rank of lowly service is a present-day reality. The seats are filled, though only the Lord knows who fill them.

This testimony to the character of the kingdom of God is so clear and distinctive as to yield a definition. According to this, the kingdom of God is a reign of mutual service and help, with an unselfish devotion to others for its impelling power.

This doctrine of the kingdom of God includes two parts, upon which apparently Jesus would have us place equal emphasis. They relate to his part in the kingdom, and to ours. So far as the definition is derived from Jesus' own relation to the kingdom, it has long been too plain to be misunderstood. That the Son of man came to the headship in the kingdom by the way of supreme self-sacrifice, taking the form of a servant, becoming obedient even unto death, giving his life a ransom for many, has long been familiar doctrine, and the church has always held it fast in wondering faith. It has been discerned that the kingdom is one in which the chief servant is king. But the definition as he gave it applies just as much to the members of the kingdom as to the king. In his teaching their law of life is made as

plain as his. The whole kingdom is one of service: the spirit of service and help is its vital air for all who belong to it. This, however, has not been so well understood. We have thought of Jesus as the great self-sacrificer, and supposed that our place in the kingdom was to be obtained by allowing him to sacrifice himself for us and trustfully accepting the benefit of his work. He was the great servant and we were the recipients of his service, and thus we were to be saved. A doctrine of service and self-sacrifice has been taught by Christians, but it has been taught too much as a corollary from the central truth of Christianity, and not enough as the central truth itself. It is the central truth. We are indeed to be recipients of our Saviour's service, and heirs of the benefit of his self-sacrifice; but his doctrine of the kingdom throws new light upon this heirship, showing what fruit of his work it is that we are to inherit. We are to be recipients of the benefit of his self-sacrifice by being transformed into the likeness of it. His kingdom is a kingdom of servants like himself, and its life is a life of mutual help, or rather of help to all and any who can be helped. This he long ago made so plain that we ought never to have missed the point. That a world of unselfish mutual helpers is the ideal world according to Christianity is absolutely clear.

In the conversation from which our definition was derived, the disciples looked upon Jesus himself as the king of the kingdom that was to be. If we call

it the kingdom of Christ, as we often do, it is easy to see that it takes from its head the character of service and self-devotion; but what if we return to the ancient name and call it the kingdom of God? Is there any such appropriateness now? The kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of service, but is this the manner of God? The common thought is far enough from this. We have felt compelled to think of God as actuated by different motives from ours. He stands on the other side of the question of service. He is to be served. In the ideal state "all are his servants," and all good consecration is consecration to him. We give service, and he receives it. But while Jesus affirms God's claim upon our all, he also shows him in another light. Jesus himself, who gave his life a ransom for many, is an expression of God's own heart. Guided by him, we trace self-sacrificing service back into God himself. God is the great servant. Every child is served by his parents, as all sound human experience testifies, and Jesus points to God as Father—Father not only because he gave us being, but because he bends over us with a Father's affectionate care. Through Jesus we know that God does not stand aloof from men in their helplessness, or hold his place above them in a spirit of superiority, or exploit them for his own glory. Rather is the Father at the service of his children. His representative is Jesus, who loved them unto the death. So when Jesus portrays God's kingdom as a kingdom of service and self-sacrifice, he only does justice to God of whom he speaks. The principle of self-devoting

help has found a place in the common life of men through the strain of hard necessity, but it is a more than human principle. He who has manifested the Father has shown us that it was grounded in the nature of eternal being.

A kingdom of mutual help is the ideal of Jesus for human life, and it is represented by the kingdom of God, expected from of old and brought in with Jesus. Of course there are other elements in his ideal of life, some of which are set forth in his varied teaching. Some of the chief of these I propose to unfold, as well as I can, in the pages that follow. But all the virtues and graces that enter into his ideal stand vitally related to the character and life that the spirit of help inspires. Whatever other graces may be gathered into it, the kingdom of God, and the ideal of Jesus, is a reign of unselfish service, seeking all good for all.

Now in a few statements, obvious but not superfluous, I must gather up what has been said of the kingdom of God, in order to project it into the use that is to follow. They are of the utmost importance for the grasping of Christianity as an ideal and the understanding of it as a living force.

(1) A kingdom that is thus described is a social kingdom. It finds its field and opportunity in the field of human society. Service, or helpfulness, is no abstract conception. It is not a doctrine, to which men can do justice by thinking of it: it is the

most concrete of things: it exists only in the realm of facts. Nor is it a virtue that can be trained in solitude. It is obvious that service implies a plurality of persons and requires that they be associated together. If only one person existed, we may imagine some virtues that he might possess, though we do not see how he could get them, but he could not devote himself to any service, and there could be no such thing as the kingdom of God. It is when men live together that mutual service is born. Men living together have their need of help and their powers to use in helping; here, therefore, is the field for the play of that fine impulse of helpfulness, normal in man and eternal in God, which the kingdom takes for its vital working force. A world that fulfilled the ideal of God's kingdom would be a world in which men helped one another; and certainly the ideal would not draw any limits to the field of help, or confine helpful activities to any particular class of services from man to man. In his kingdom God has not drawn any such lines of limitation or restriction. Above all else the kingdom of God is a social spirit and a social force, manifest in the life of man with man. Of old it was conceived as a nation. When it came it was not a nation, but it was still a matter of organized humanity. It is a force that penetrates like leaven, carrying and imparting its character as it goes; and the character that it carries is helpful love. This self-imparting quality goes penetrating through the world, and through mutual service it moves from man to man, from group to group, from

race to race. This is social work, and we see at once how impossible it is for any doctrine of strict individualism to do justice to this divine conception. The kingdom of God has no life except in a mass of men. The greater the thronging multitude, and the richer the training of the Christian heart, the more glorious is the opportunity for a genuine kingdom of God, which is the Christian ideal for the world.

(2) The kingdom of God is a kingdom of personal experience and character, just as truly as it is a social kingdom. It would be the greatest of mistakes to think otherwise. Of course social work depends upon individual work, and the social ideal cannot be realized except as the ideal personal life is lived by many. The kingdom of God has to be a kingdom of individual renewal before it can be a kingdom of social power. Apart from all doctrines, it stands as an every-day fact that except a man be born again he cannot enter into it. Men must be born into its spirit, transformed that they may live its life. From an inferior mind, an impure spirit, a heart unmoved by God, a selfish will, a proud preference, an indolent temper, a grasping ambition, a haughty isolation, a cold indifference to men, a contempt for self-sacrifice, or any other form of opposition to the spirit of Jesus and of God, men must be brought into sympathy with the heart of the great Servant. They must be led to make their own the mind of Christ, which knows no way but the way of usefulness. There is very much unselfishness in the world, and

yet the kingdom of which we are speaking is a kingdom of new life, since it is so profoundly unlike the life that mankind has come to live. Because it implies this change, and the growth of this new spirit, it is a kingdom of personal experience and character. And the need of experience congenial to its quality is not confined to the initial stages. The new spirit needs not only to be breathed into individual men: it needs to remain in them and be exercised by use and training until it can no more forsake them: wherefore it needs to be nourished and cherished by all kindred influence until it has become their very selves. The kingdom has to create its own people to do its work: for though the spirit of unselfish love is trained in common life by the providence of God, still in the true sense it is only half created anywhere, and the kingdom has to inspire men for its purpose. And so far as men have become taught and trained and capable, the kingdom is served by their putting forth of their personal energy in accordance with its spirit. Thus while the kingdom of God is a kingdom of social relations and works, it is not one in which the individual is lost in the crowd or the high significance of the personal life is overlooked. Here every man is himself, though no man liveth unto himself.

(3) The kingdom of God is a kingdom of ethics. All social life is ethical, for all relations of man with man imply both rights and duties in great variety. In the complicated life that men have come to live together the ethical question, the question what men

ought to do, arises at every turn and in all possible forms. Right and wrong are being done every moment in every conceivable manner, and fresh opportunities of right and wrong are perpetually arising in new intensity and complication. Into this moral world, where good and evil are striving together, comes now the kingdom of God, with its supreme ideal of goodness and its urgent call for all such effort as will make the world better. How it reinforces the worthy ethical impulses and condemns the unworthy! how it forces inquiry into the right and wrong of what men are doing! how it brings high standards to bear on all! how it weeps over oppression, injustice, and the harming of the human! how it pleads for righteousness and fellowship and help! how it glorifies all that is good! Its demand for doing good as the law of life is a perfectly intelligible demand, and a searching one also. Our best dreams of the future are dreams of a time when the world is governed by the motive of the kingdom of God, the motive of unselfish helpfulness: this is the attractive and inspiring point in all the Utopias. The permeating of all the common life of men by this Christian motive is the task of the kingdom of God. All ethical movements in the living world need to be captivated by this divine impulse, and all high ethical hopes take courage since a kingdom of God himself is proposing to bring this to pass.

(4) The kingdom that is thus ethical in its field and character is a religious kingdom. It could not be the sound and hopeful ethical order that it is if it

were not religious. It is a religious kingdom, for its Lord is God—not, as we shall see, a distant God, or a God abstractly conceived, but a God in closest relation with men, vitally joined to them in seeking the end for which the kingdom exists. Not of himself apart from the eternal power and inspiration is a man expected to become a true member of this kingdom, and not outside of communion with God is the working force of the kingdom to be maintained. The hope of success is built on God, and the daily force proceeds from him. The characteristic life of the kingdom is a life above this world, lived in personal fellowship with God. From him its motives and inspirations proceed. The central principle of the Christian religion sets the key. The various forms of Christian experience all find their place in the kingdom and do their part in fulfilling its ideal. Religion, the life of man in his relation to God, is the realm in which the entire work of the kingdom goes on, and the ideal man of the kingdom is a richly and comprehensively religious man.

(5) Centred thus in God and love, the kingdom of God is a kingdom of all virtues. The principle of this kingdom worthily meets the comprehensive need of man, for it provides for a life in which ethics and religion, personal character and social mission, all come fully to their own. God is all-good, and fellowship with him in unselfish love and service is a soil in which all human virtues grow. The world does not half believe it, but it is a fact that the spirit of unselfish service is a grace with which all other graces

of character, of whatever kind, harmoniously blend. The list of Christian graces has been read with admiration, and the graces themselves have gladdened the life of the world, in all Christian time; but all of them are "nothing without love." And any virtues that have not been mentioned in that list, and that rejoice perhaps not to call themselves Christian, are thin and poor if this grace does not enrich them. The adaptation of the kingdom of God to the growth of virtue resides in the simple fact that virtue grows at the best advantage when something is being done, and the kingdom of God is a kingdom of work. The appreciation of virtues may grow in the cloister, where men meditate, but the virtues themselves grow in the open field. It is life that rears them, and there is no field for the training of all sorts of virtue like the kingdom in which unselfish service is the law. Of course we have to confess that the growth of virtues in the kingdom of God has been far too slow, and the development is far from perfect even yet. For this there are many reasons, one of which is that Christians have so greatly misconceived the kingdom and deprived it of its opportunity. But notwithstanding all the faults, experience reports that the kingdom of God has brought forth among men a harvest of virtue for which the whole world ought to give God thanks. The graces of the kingdom are genuine, and are growing still. When multitudes of men are loving and helping one another better than they are now, they will be better men. New conditions bring out new modes of goodness, old graces take new

forms, character assumes new richness and beauty when new occasions put it to new tests.

The kingdom of God represents the Christian ideal for the life of mankind. Having viewed it in broad outlook, we must now attend to some teaching in which Jesus fills up the picture. In various ways he has described the ideal person, life, and relations. And when we know what he wished life to be, we may be sure that we know the best.

V

RIGHTEOUSNESS

When Jesus desired to set forth the character that was to be approved, he had in Hebrew usage a word ready to his use. The word was *Righteous*, and its kindred noun was *Righteousness*. By necessity he spoke in the terminology of his place and time, not of ours, and the Hebrew religion had prepared for him this word.

Its meaning is of the simplest. To be righteous is to be right, or as one ought to be. Righteousness, accordingly, is that which ought to be, in character or in conduct. If a man is regarded in himself, righteousness is a personal character; but as soon as men are regarded as living together, righteousness becomes also a social character, a quality of rightness exhibited in mutual relations. The meaning is most distinctly and searchingly an ethical one, and the terms never lose their solemn and urgent ethical significance. It is important to note, however, that the ancient meaning is larger and less restricted than the modern. Very much of the modern use of the word makes righteousness synonymous with justice. A righteous God is a just God, faithful to the principle of the *quid pro quo*, certain to exact the due,

and a righteous man is one of whom fairness is characteristic. But the Hebrew use is broader. Here righteousness denotes that which ought to be, and that includes much more than justice or strict equity. In the Old Testament God is the type of righteousness, of course, and his righteousness was taken to include his generosity as well as his justice, his faithful grace as well as his faithful severity. It covers the certainty of his kindness and his watchfulness over the poor and needy that they may suffer no wrong, as well as the certainty of his punishment for those who do the wrong. In like manner in the New Testament we read: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It is righteous to forgive those who confess. On the same principle righteousness in man is of comprehensive character, including in general the goodness that should belong to man. As a descriptive term, the word righteous is applied to those who are right in the large, the ideal and acceptable people.

It must be added that in the Old Testament righteousness is no less a religious grace than an ethical quality. It is never separated from religion or regarded as existing apart from right relations with God. Just as in the Old Testament wisdom is at heart religion and folly is the same as ungodliness, so righteousness and unrighteousness are separated by the religious line. The Hebrew thought moves in the world of God. Human standards are insufficient, and so are human motives: to be righteous,

a man must be godly, ordering his life by God's standard of what ought to be.

The insistence of Jesus upon righteousness is never less clear and strong than that of the Old Testament. He has often been misunderstood upon this point, and his gospel has been set over against the claim for actual righteousness. He has even been supposed to offer something else as a substitute for it, equally acceptable to God. This he has been thought to do because in the sad history of sinful life righteousness had become impossible to men. But any one who has been accustomed to interpret Jesus in this manner should make a careful study of his teaching, the point of which is thus completely missed. With all the force of divine religion he insists upon righteousness as indispensable, and leaves no room for a doctrine of anything to take its place. Any unreal or supposed or imputed righteousness stands at the opposite pole to his teaching. Jesus is a far more complete and thorough-going teacher of actual righteousness than ever the Old Testament was. With him, too, as with the Old Testament, righteousness is not a matter of ethics merely, but of religion also. With him indeed it is even more profoundly inwrought with religion, since with him all the higher life is more personal and inward, and more alive with God, than the Old Testament knew how to make it. With him the motives of religion are motives to righteousness in all its forms, whether personal or social, ethical or religious, and the sufficient righteousness has its source in the deepest religion of the heart. Here

again we find the ideal for human character grounded in the ideal relation of man to God.

It is in the Sermon on the Mount that we find the general teaching of Jesus concerning righteousness. It is commonly thought that in these chapters of the First Gospel we have utterances that were made at various times, and grouped together by the compiler of the book. If it is so, they have been wisely collected and arranged, for in the treatment of the present topic we find in the discourse a genuine unity. Even at this date it may not be superfluous to note that in the Sermon on the Mount we have genuine Christian teaching, not, as many readers used to suppose, legalistic teaching, designed to break the way toward the Christian gospel, which could be proclaimed only after Christ had died. It has been so supposed because the Christian message was misunderstood. This teaching is thoroughly characteristic of Jesus, and is of the substance of the Christian religion. The Master addresses his disciples primarily, but he addresses them both as disciples and as men, telling them at once what it is right and normal for men to be and do, and what he expects his disciples to be and do; and these two are the same. His instruction here is as truly universal as any that was ever uttered in human speech, for he declares the indispensable substance of the real righteousness. In doing this he shows us the heart of the Christian ideal.

Among the Beatitudes with which the Sermon

opens, there are two that celebrate righteousness, and they show most clearly how high an estimate Jesus placed upon it. In the first his congratulation goes out to the man whose longing after righteousness is as instinctive and irresistible as hunger and thirst; and in the second, to the man whose devotion to righteousness is so unalterable as to hold him firm and faithful under persecution for its sake. In the insatiable yearning for righteousness, certain to be satisfied, and in unswerving fidelity to righteousness, worthy to be crowned, Jesus beholds true blessedness for man. To those who endure persecution for righteousness' sake belongs the kingdom of heaven.

Passing beyond the Beatitudes, we soon learn more definitely what Jesus meant by righteousness. The term is ambiguous, because there is wide difference in men's judgment as to what is good, but Jesus makes his own teaching clear. In his circle of life scribes and Pharisees were well-known illustrations of one accepted and influential conception of righteousness. But Jesus declares that no one can enter the kingdom of heaven, which is of course the ideal state upon which all holy hopes are set, unless he possesses a better righteousness than theirs. This was most radical and heretical doctrine when he uttered it, and though the change of times has made it cease to be heretical, it is radical and searching doctrine still.

Jesus did not mean that scribes and Pharisees were necessarily bad men. What he did was to disparage the righteousness of which they were samples.

There is no mystery about what was meant by the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. It may be defined as the goodness which consists in having done what God has specifically commanded. It is the righteousness of obedience to commandments.

Even yet this idea of righteousness is not extinct among Christians. In the days of scribes and Pharisees it was a most natural conception. The Jewish people were living under an elaborate law which represented to them the authority of God, and set before them what God desired them to do. Scribes and Pharisees were trained in knowledge of it, and knew it through and through. They counted up its commands, and made them out to be six hundred and thirteen in all. They labored to obey this law of God in minute detail, making scrupulous care a matter of conscience. What more could God require or desire of them than obedience to the law that he had given? Surely they who were zealous and careful in doing this would be acceptable to him. So the scribes and Pharisees, knowing that they were keeping the commandments, judged themselves righteous—that is, sufficiently good, right in ethics and acceptable to God in religion.

The quality of a righteousness thus sought is plain to be seen. Self-righteousness, in view of external obedience, was the natural result. The principle was the simple but delusive one of merit: obedience to the law deserved the approval of the lawgiver, and obtained it. Acceptance with God was earned by the doing of the work, and the work was the man's

own: so, therefore, was the merit. This is self-righteousness. And this self-righteousness was sure to be grounded mainly in external obedience. When meritorious obedience to the law was sought, it was inevitable that chief attention should be paid to the parts of the law that could be obeyed most successfully, and in which obedience could be most easily observed and reckoned up. As a matter of fact, the greater part of the commandments had reference to conduct, which was visible and not hard to estimate; and it was perfectly natural that righteousness should be sought through outward conformity to the letter of the law. The law called indeed for truth in the inward parts; but that could be taken for granted, while conformity in the outward life could not. Thus the method tended to produce bondage to the letter of the law, and indifference to its deeper spirit, and self-righteousness in view of external obedience is a true name for that which followed. Doubtless it would be unjust to imagine that scribes and Pharisees knew nothing of any better religion than this, for that would be difficult when the Psalms and prophets were in their hands. But this was the character of the righteousness which their system of life led them to believe that they possessed.

This is legalism in religion, which was powerfully encouraged by the Jewish system. But it was not there alone, for it is so natural to the heart of man that it may be found anywhere. Man loves to believe that he is earning his way with God. Conceive of obedience to elaborate law, or to positive com-

mands, or to specific moral obligations, as the sufficient way to please God, or believe that by obeying his requirements we can obtain merit and win his favor by deserving it, and though we may call ourselves Christians we shall be in the company of scribes and Pharisees with regard to righteousness. We shall attend chiefly to externals, carefully watch our performance of our duties, imagine ourselves acceptable to God, and be deeply self-satisfied in the result. Ethical life can be conducted in this manner, and so can religious, and such conduct of life is compatible with a good deal of earnestness in the desire to be acceptable to God.

From the assertion of the claim for a better righteousness Jesus proceeds to show what it consists in. His way to the point is very short.

"No," he says in effect, "it is not enough to conform to the express commands of God. The law says, Thou shalt not kill; but I say unto you that a man may be a murderer without killing. Hatred and anger suffice to make a man a murderer at heart." It is plain that if a man is to be righteous he must be in no sense a murderer. For one who wills the death of another in hatred or in wrath, it is an evasion before God to say, "I have not killed him" Such a man is a murderer, although he has done no murder. So righteousness calls for more than the word of the law demands. It requires being as well as doing.

He shows it again. The law forbids committing adultery. "But I say unto you," says Jesus, that adultery may be committed without the act. The

greedy gaze of lust, intended to keep warm the unlawful longing, is adultery. It is adultery where the passion is, namely, in the heart. There may be none in the flesh, but in the heart that which the law forbids exists, and the man is an adulterer there. In order to have the better righteousness, a man must be no adulterer, either in the flesh or in the heart: the real self must be no adulterer. The freedom from the sin must belong not to the man's actions, but to himself.

These interpretations and deepenings of the ancient law lead us to understand what Jesus meant by the better righteousness which he calls indispensable. It consists not in doing what one is required to do, but in being what one ought to be. It is personal rightness, rightness in character. As soon as we have truly caught the tone of Jesus' voice in his teaching, we wonder how men can have thought that a real righteousness could inhere in their doings. In his presence how plain it is that righteousness must inhere in men themselves! It is a personal fact. He did not conceive that God's claims have been adequately expressed in commandments or could be so expressed. With him the relation between God and man never appears as a legal one: it is always a personal relation; and thence it follows that a righteousness that God can approve must be a solid personal righteousness. In his sight there is no such thing as law righteousness, or righteousness of works, or righteousness of merit. All these are ruled out by the necessity that righteousness be the man's own,

resident in himself. So we find Jesus calling for real personal rightness of heart and will before God, truth in the inward parts, to be expressed in the conduct; and he would have us judge the conduct not by comparison with commandments or by estimating what it deserves, but as exactly what it is, in the light of the character that inspired it, its conformity to the mind of God, and its value for good ends. It is morally axiomatic that this is the true ideal of righteousness.

In this re-estimating of righteousness we see at a glance how ethics and religion are inextricably wrought together in the ideal of Jesus. He cannot contemplate one without the other. If we try to distribute his discourse between the two, they appear as two sides of the same reality. One cannot be acceptable to God save as he hold a sound ethical position, and one cannot hold a sound ethical position except his inmost self be devoted to God. The ideal picture shows us a real man living in real moral goodness through real religious devotion to God.

In another connection I have already spoken of the sayings that follow, concerning oaths and swearing, and concerning revenge and generosity. But their testimony to the better righteousness must be mentioned here. Instead of claiming confirmation for your word, says Jesus, and making it a matter of conscience to keep the word that you have sworn to, be a man whose word needs no confirmation. Instead of accepting the privilege of retaliation, and measuring what you take in accordance with the law, be a

man who will not retaliate, but will go to the very opposite extreme in returning good for evil. Such reality is the ideal of righteousness.

Now it must be noticed how far Jesus has gone beyond the individualistic field in the enunciation of his ideal. In the cases already cited he has been treating of righteousness in its social aspects. It belongs to a man not merely as a being by himself, or as a soul related to his God, but not less as a member of the human family. To murder man, to sin against woman, to speak the truth or not, to take revenge or render good for evil, these are social matters, and the righteousness that inspires worthy conduct in these fields is a social fact. No narrowly individualistic thing is that which Jesus is speaking of. Not even in the two Beatitudes is it to be interpreted in individualistic fashion. When a man rightly hungers and thirsts after righteousness he longs for it to be in all others and in the common life, as well as in himself. When a man has been persecuted for righteousness' sake, it is usually for making some social application of righteousness that he has been made to suffer. So Jesus has all the time been speaking words of social significance. But now he comes to love and hatred, and thus goes deepest into the social quality that belongs to the better righteousness. Now he appeals to his hearers to substitute the social virtue for the social vice, love that saves the race for hatred that corrupts it. For love is the bond of society, while hatred is the anti-social force.

Jesus quotes from the ancient law the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor," but does not dwell upon it. The emphasis falls upon the contradictory expansion of it, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy." Scribes and Pharisees were not responsible for this perversion, for it was simply a survival of immemorial barbaric tribalism, which counted all but kinsmen as enemies and reckoned it a virtue to hate them. But though they were expounders of the law they had not had insight and vitality enough to shake off this absolute contradiction of its intent. Their idea of duty had been so external as to blind them to the deep necessity of the call for love, and permitted them to retain without protest this inherited contradiction. That love must be a vital thing in the lover, and therefore free to flow out toward all, and that love for enemies is a diviner thing than love for friends, were truths for which they had no perception. Their righteousness had had no power to protect love from this dreadful perversion: it had even permitted them to read the distorted precept in as an addition to the law of God. But Jesus announces as the ideal, and as a trait in the better righteousness, a love that surpasses and supersedes the motives to hatred, casts out enmity, and adopts the enemy into helpful and redemptive ministration. It is the highest love that men know, and it is so vitally a part of the man himself that he cannot fail to act upon it.

That this is the real righteousness Jesus indicates by showing its source and affinities. This love is godlike. It is no virtue to love your friends, he says,

but to love your enemies is to imitate the matchless work of God—nay, it is to exercise a grace derived from him. It is a part of sonship. "Love your enemies," says Jesus, "because God loves his and deals gently with them. You are his children, and the goodness of your Father is the type for you. Perfect in his manner you are to be, and must seek to be." Broad, free, impartial love to men is the child's likeness to the Father, the human reproduction of the eternal heart of God; it is the crown of goodness in all character, human or divine. How lofty is this teaching, and how self-commending! The quality that is real in God is to be real in men, and the Christian ideal is attained in proportion as this comes to pass.

The discourse upon the Mount now changes, though the same spiritual strain continues. After insisting upon reality, genuineness, the solid fact, in human goodness, Jesus speaks of certain acts of religious service, and of two ways in which they may be performed. He does not claim now to be exhibiting the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees at work, but he did so, and his hearers must have recognized the picture. Over against this he placed the operation of the genuine righteousness in this field, and portrayed the true ideal of religious service. Here again we see how vain the attempt must be to draw a clear line between ethics and religion in his teaching.

He speaks now of the hypocrites, and the manner in which they perform religious service. A hypocrite

is an actor, and hypocrisy is playing a part. Perhaps it might have been better if the words had been thus translated. In Jesus' usage here, hypocrisy consists in doing something that ought to have a serious meaning, not only without that meaning, but with some other instead. It is doing religious acts with a motive that is something else than religious. For such conduct hypocrisy, or acting, was a good name, and still is. The acts are religious, but the ethical insincerity nullifies the religion.

He illustrates from almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, acts well known in his circle as acts of religion. All three are expressive of loyalty to God, and the very performing of them is an unspoken acknowledgment of him. Nevertheless some perform them not unto God, but to be seen by men. Their desire is that men may admire their piety, and so they plan to perform these acts openly and elaborately. They address them professedly to God, but really to the spectators, for effect. So their service is a mere show, like play-acting; it not only lacks the meaning that it professes, but bears another that belies the profession. It has no moral value, for it is unreal: it has no reality in the men themselves. Those who deal in such false show may indeed have their reward, such as they are seeking, for they do get some foolish admiration, for a while; but this is all that is coming to them, and the blessing of the Father is not included. What is wanted is reality. Let almsgiving be secret, let prayer be with God alone, let fasting be unprofessed and invisible. The one to be considered is the Father

who is in secret and sees in secret. He knows the service for exactly what it is, and has power to recompense it with divine acknowledgment. This is obviously right: what is done unto God, unto God let it be done. Then things will be what they seem, and this is the ideal way: prayer will not be pretence, nor almsgiving ostentation, nor fasting an empty show. It is necessary, and it is enough, that he who sees in secret should find there the same thing that is done in public.

In the same strain with this is the great word in the Fourth Gospel: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Here speaks true inward religion: here is the ideal approach of man to God. God the Spirit can be worshipped only by man the spirit. The acceptable worship is simple, direct, and genuine, face to face and heart to heart, independent of external things, no forms relied upon as indispensable, no intermediaries interfering between God and the soul, no sacred places accounted necessary, only spirit and truth, genuineness and sincerity, reality of worship within, opening of spirit to Spirit, making up the substance of the act.

The First Gospel contains another passage, of far different tone, in which hypocrisy is largely illustrated and is charged home upon scribes and Pharisees. Dealing as before with false pretence, Jesus utters a startling series of woes, denouncing the hypocrites whom he met in actual life, driving home

the same demand for inward reality that we have heard him proclaim. Men of high professions proved false by voluntary bad practice he denounces without stint. He accuses them of living a life that belies their teaching; of being enemies to that kingdom of heaven of which they speak with reverence and hope, refusing it for themselves and forbidding it to others; of eagerly making proselytes to the law, whom they immediately initiate deep into their own wickedness; of solemn trifling with oaths, deliberately minimizing the claims of the divine sanctity; of extreme punctiliousness about the minutiæ of the law, while they ignore the great moral duties to which it bears witness; of laying great stress upon a fair exterior, while they make a reputable life a cover for hidden iniquity; of vain boasting of their superiority to their fathers who killed the prophets, when they are about to kill the Christ. In this great condemnation we hear the same strain against hypocrisy that we have heard before. It denounces falseness in religion as crime in ethics. It has sometimes been itself condemned as excessive, and considered impossible on the lips of that Jesus whose gentle spirit we know elsewhere. But in fact the thought that runs through it is precisely identical with that of his other teaching on hypocrisy; and as for the tone of it, shall he not be allowed to burn with indignation at systematic falseness under the name of religion? If he were incapable of such wrath he would be no true son of God.

Contrast for a moment this hypocritic spirit with

the spirit of the fifty-first Psalm, the solemn prayer of penitence, the classic in its kind. There, what honesty in confession, what consciousness of the seriousness of sin, what longing for inward genuineness, what reliance upon the forgiving grace of God! Here is reality, truth in the inward parts. The spirit condemned in the twenty-third of Matthew and the spirit expressed in the fifty-first Psalm are at the extreme opposite poles in religion. The psalmist knew something of the better righteousness, as indeed the humble and simple-hearted have done in all ages.

In parable Jesus drew the same contrast, bringing out the true righteousness as against the Pharisaic. A Pharisee, self-righteous, stands "praying with himself," although he speaks to God. He is self-conscious, ignorant of himself, proud, ostentatious, glorying in imagined goodness of his own producing. He thanks God for his superiority to other men, and gives him an account of it. A publican close by, despised by the Pharisee and cited to God as an example of what he is not, knows himself a sinner, deals honestly with himself, takes the sinner's place before God, bows in humility and penitence, claims nothing and asks all, offers his prayer and ceases, and in all this is true to the holy spirit of reality. Jesus records the result by saying, "This man went down to his house justified—accepted as righteous—rather than the other." Righteousness was not imputed to him: he had it. He was accepted as right, for the reason that he was right: he was taking the

only right position for a sinful man to hold. He was humbling himself before God in spirit and in truth, and really asking what his soul was in need of. Here was the better righteousness, and this was the man for the righteous God to accept.

How clear are these teachings about the nature of the better righteousness, and how simple is that righteousness itself! What Jesus calls for is reality in worthy character, goodness, genuine and uncontradicted, a heart sincere, working consistently in life. Nothing false must intrude, nothing formal or artificial must take the place of the real rightness. Jesus never said, "Be real," for that mode of speech is too modern to be his, but the words exactly represent him, and from this simple demand he never varies. "Not every one that saith to me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

> "Not he that nameth the name,
> But he that doeth the will."

In ethics, of course, this is the simplest possible teaching. It is not peculiar to Jesus, and cannot be peculiar to any one, for it is the universal first truth in morality—nothing is good but real goodness. The teaching is axiomatic and self-evidencing. It needs various expounding, applying, and enforcing, but no proving: no conscience or judgment has any right to dissent from it. This central truth in all sound morality Jesus set forth with unparalleled im-

pressiveness. And when we pass over into the sphere of religion, we find him applying to religion also this first principle of good morals, and insisting that religion itself consists in this same inward reality and genuineness. How great a service he did to religion by presenting this as the ideal, we shall see as we proceed. At present it is enough to say that to religion this teaching is a charter both of liberty and of power.

Some Christians have wondered why they found it difficult to show that the teaching of Jesus was strictly peculiar to himself. But as for the present matter, if he had taught a doctrine of righteousness that was solely his own, that would have meant that it was a specialty and a partial doctrine, upon which some other teacher might improve. There is only one central conception and ideal of righteousness, and here the doctrine of Jesus is universal and necessary truth. It can take a thousand forms in application, but nothing can be substituted for it. The peculiarity of Jesus is that he interprets righteousness in the light of a better conception of God, and of the relation that man sustains to God, than has been known elsewhere. According to him, it is through the ideal relation of man to God that the ideal of righteousness is to be made real; and this we must now consider.

VI

THE TWOFOLD LAW OF LOVE

When we listened to Jesus discoursing of righteousness, we heard him emphasize the need of inward reality, the true fact of goodness before God, as against satisfaction with outward performances and proprieties; but we did not hear a very large account of the traits that compose the character that must be so genuine. Yet of course he will tell us this in his own way, as he must if his teaching is to be effective. Hearers are too often content with being exhorted to be genuine, without insisting upon an answer to the question, "Genuine in what?" Some of the teaching that fills out his ideal of human character and relation to God must now pass before us. If we are to place the elements that compose it in the right proportion, we cannot do otherwise than place at the front his citation from the Old Testament of the Twofold Law of Love, love to God and men, and the estimate that he set upon its value. Here again is a word that goes to the very heart both of ethics and of religion, and gives revealing light upon the Christian ideal in both.

From a Pharisee came the question, "What is the greatest command in the law?"—or, as the Second

Gospel gives it, "What manner of command is first of all?" If we may trust the language as precisely given, the questioner did not desire Jesus simply to select one command from the list and designate it as the greatest. He seems to have been asking for a judgment as to the character that a command must bear in order to be the most important—a far better question than the other would have been. The Jews were often discussing which was the most important of the ceremonial commands, and on that point there were various opinions. But as to the supreme requirement in the whole divine economy of old, they all knew what that was understood to be. The ancient word was, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord thy God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Probably the enumeration in the command was designed rather for emphasis than for analysis. It was not intended to divide the man into parts and bid him love God separately with each of them. The meaning is rather, "Love God with all the parts and powers thou hast, and with the full energy of them all." By common understanding this was the first and great commandment. Through a curious blending of formality and seriousness, the words of this supreme command were stored in every phylactery. If the inquiring Pharisee wore phylacteries in full number, as he may have done, he had the answer to his question bound upon his hand, his forehead, and his heart when he propounded his question. And Jesus responded as any thoughtful

Jew would expect, giving the answer alike of the formalist and of the spiritual reader of the law: "This is the first and great commandment." Love to God ranked above all. This was the kind of law to which the first place belonged—a law of the spirit and a law of love; a law, too, that bound a man directly to God himself.

When Jesus cites this as the crown of the law, he does not mean that this is the crown of legalism or of the legal system. It is not, for legalism does not reach so high. By the law he meant the ancient instruction of God, companion in his mind with the prophets, who were God's teaching representatives. He meant to say, "This first have men been divinely taught, that with all their powers they must love their God." In this light it is not strange that the first command of the law has always been understood to have been adopted here as first also in the gospel. There is no touch of the spirit of legalism in the command or in Jesus' use of it. In either Testament it stands forth simply as the first requirement in sound religion. When Jesus proclaimed this as the first and great commandment, he was not inventing a law, nor was he adopting one that had been invented in Hebraism: he was simply recognizing the first great duty and privilege of man, known of old and now declared again. This was a command so fundamental that it could stand nowhere but in the first place in any revelation from God. Thus it was that he answered the request not merely for a command selected as the first, but for a command that must needs be the first.

We should misunderstand Jesus, therefore, if we were to associate this command solely with his authority, and imagine that it was binding because he gave it. Not so: he gave it because it was binding. He was proclaiming a law of normal life, as wide in its range as the existence of intelligent beings, and he was proclaiming the primacy of that law. This is the ideal attitude of spiritual beings toward their God: there is One above the soul, and that One is to be loved: the soul must look up with love to God. Teaching men to live, Jesus gave, then, this as the first law of their living. In this again we encounter the axiomatic and self-evidencing nature of his moral instruction. This law is independent of external authority. It is very true that for his friends and followers his authority as their Master may stand as a reason why they have received it as the law of their life. It is matter of history that he associated it with himself, and gave it for them the authority of his Mastership. Nevertheless it remains true that Jesus could never make it our duty to love God by commanding it. Not even God himself could do that. It is our duty, and therefore Jesus commands it; our privilege, and therefore he points it out. This is no merely Christian duty, supported by his authority, nor does he ever claim it as such. He is simply requiring what is required, and holding up the true ideal.

Accordingly neither here nor elsewhere do we find him giving reasons for loving God. In any case it would not be in keeping with his method to do so,

and it is plain also that to his own heart there was no need of argument or illustration to justify this great first love. To him the love was as natural as life. Nevertheless he did imply a reason for loving God, and by implying commended it to us. It is a reason that comes from him with ineffable sweetness. In his clear call to love God it is implied that God is lovable. The lovableness of God, which is a primary fact for successful moral and religious life in man, is as truly proclaimed by Jesus as if he had put it into words. "Love God," he says in substance: "you can. Do not be afraid to commit yourself to love toward him with all your heart and soul and might, for he is lovable to the uttermost, and you will find him so. He will not disappoint you." By calling us to love God utterly, Jesus pledges to us his word of honor, as it were, that we shall find him able to win our love, and worthy of it forever.

Of course the lovableness of God was implied in the ancient law, as it must be in any reasonable call to love. As a matter of fact, the spiritual training of Israel bore its supreme fruit in the growing recognition of God as worthy of the best affection of man, and as able to hold it. But the ancient affirmation was necessarily less full of meaning than the later, for God was not so well known of old, and by no lips but those of Jesus could his lovableness be set forth with such convincing power. He knew it himself with so true a knowledge that his announcement was a perfect testimony.

It is interesting to note that in this call for love to God, Jesus does not introduce his favorite name

and say, "Thou shalt love thy Father." He retains the old form of speech, and simply presents the object of affection as "the Lord thy God." Moreover, the addition "thy God" obtains somewhat of new meaning upon his lips. It was to Israel that the old law was addressed, and in the first instance it was a nation's affectionate loyalty that was demanded for the nation's God. But with Jesus the unit in religion is the individual, and the love for which he calls is personal, the loyal affection of a loving soul. In the old time, also, God was regarded as especially Israel's own, and the possessive word was often taken to indicate an exclusive right to his favor, meaning "thy God as he is, not the God of other peoples." But Jesus knows nothing of any such exclusiveness or tribal privilege, and as he utters it, "thy God" is addressed to any one, and is a term of universality. The law is for all: every one must love his God: no one can live aright without him, and so good is he that nothing but love suits the case of men in their dealings with him. Really to know him is to love him, and he who loves him not knows him not as he is. Hence the preciousness of any revelation, and especially of Jesus' own, in which God is manifested so clearly in his loveworthiness. Amid all the calls to doubt and distrust of which our life is so full, it is unspeakably refreshing to hear the beloved and trustworthy voice of Jesus calling us to a love which the infinite worthiness of God will satisfy forever.

What this implication of the lovableness of God

is to religion, we can see at once. Here is the fundamental defect of the religions of the world: the nations have not become acquainted with a God who could command the best love that they were able to give. The only God who can do that is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, known in the best experience of the heart. From communion with a God thus lovable and adorable there may come forth a religion into which the glory and honor of the nations may indeed be brought. And the lovableness of God is as great a fact for ethics as it is for religion. It means that the moral order to which human ethics responds is grounded in a goodness which the best in man can delight in with the joy of love. Without such a substratum in the delightfulness of God, human ethics must lack the sense of confidence and hope that is necessary to the best moral life. But when we can say, "The God of our conscience is the God of our hearts," the moral life is transfigured and walks in gladness.

I wish that we could see just what Jesus himself was thinking of when he spoke of love to God, but that would imply vision into his own soul. If we could discern what his own love was, we might see more clearly what kind of affection on our part would fill out the meaning of the law. There are various types of love, corresponding partly to differences in temperament, and the Christian love to God has been conceived in many ways by Christian people. Aside from differences in temperament, various conditions

of life and varieties of religious thought have led to different experiences of this love, and different expositions of it. Sometimes the Christian love to God is a grateful response to divine grace; sometimes a meditative joy, an admiring approval of character and adoration of the perfect One; sometimes a silent and inward mystical affection, trembling and rapturous; sometimes a longing that knows no rest for deeper acquaintance and better fellowship; sometimes an enthusiastic devotion to the holy will of God; and sometimes these various types of love are blended, in any and all proportions. Perhaps love to God has oftenest been regarded mainly as a matter of inward life, a feeling and sentiment of the soul—for is not love naturally a function of the hidden man of the heart? This accords with the spirit of Jesus, if only it be taken as a part and not as the whole. If we look to Jesus himself for illustration of love to God, we learn at once that it is far from being entirely an inward grace. It is also an active and outgoing affection. Love delights not only in God, but in all that God delights in. It takes hold not only upon his beauty, but upon his will. To love God is to love what God loves, and so to love it as to be it and do it. This is how Jesus loved him—not emotionally alone, or meditatively, or approvingly, or rapturously, though he must have loved in all these ways, but with eager consecration of himself to God's uses. "Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God," is the true utterance of love. Love to God makes a worker with God: Jesus is witness. Yet withal it has those

other qualities: it bears in its bosom the inward gladness, peace and rest, the blessedness, aspiration and hope, the rapturous delight, the incomparable satisfaction and the insatiable longing for more, that correspond to the infinite perfection of its object. Love is at once a practical force and a mystical and delicious secret, and is not less the one for being the other. But in the summons of Jesus, if we may judge from his own example, the main idea is that love shall enlist the soul with God in all divine endeavor.

When Jesus was inquired of about the first commandment, he was not satisfied with specifying that, but brought out from the ancient treasury another command to set beside it. Having quoted the first command, he added, "A second is like it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." By the side of love to God he placed love to men.

This law of neighbor-love was often interpreted by Jews, as we have seen, in the light of ancient tribal prejudice, and perverted into permission to hate any one who could not strictly be called a neighbor. The law as it stands in Leviticus does not authorize such hatred, and yet it is not of universal scope. It is in connection with the mention of "the children of thy people" that the Israelite is bidden love his neighbor as himself: that is to say, the neighbor that is contemplated is the fellow-Israelite. The same principle appears when, in the same connection, "the stranger that is with thee" is mentioned, and it is added,

"Thou shalt love him as thyself." The old method of life still had its influence, and it was considered that the alien became entitled to the neighbor-love through adoption into the tribe, but not otherwise. As long as tribal feeling survived in this manner, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy" was only a natural corollary of this command. But Jesus was untouched by any such inherited barbarity, and meant the law just as he quoted it, as a law of love. And we should note that here again, as in citing the first command, he brought over an old national or communal command to individual application. Without withdrawing it from its broader range, he brought it home to each man as a law of personal life.

In trying to understand the neighbor-love, we must remember that in this second command a third form of love is recognized, besides love to God and to the neighbor. In the word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," self-love is assumed as a fact and taken as the basis for comparison. It is assumed as a matter of fact that a man loves himself, and always will. This assumption needs no defence. Self-love, or the self-regarding impulse, is simply the normal action of life: life instinctively asserts and protects itself, and provides for its own wants. Our own interests are attended to through a natural necessity. We should note that Jesus puts no condemnation upon this self-regard, so necessary and inevitable. He accepts it as a primary fact of life that a man will put upon himself a high estimate and affection. In

thus recognizing self-love Jesus does not stop to point out the dangers that attend it, or condemn the selfishness into which it may so easily degenerate, but simply uses it for comparison and leaves it where he found it. He has done more than any one else to put self-love in its right place and keep it there, and his use of this very law has been one chief means to this end. The point now to be noticed is that here stands self-love, an ineradicable and worthy element in our life, and that Jesus uses it for his purpose. By his citation of the law he guides us in defining the neighbor-love that he requires of us, by comparing it with this which we know so well.

Therefore we have to inquire into the quality of self-love. If we do so we shall find that the self-love which this law contemplates is not exactly identical with some forms of self-regard which have become common in the world. The self-love that is sanctioned by Jesus here is not an exaggerated self-estimate, or a meditative self-appreciation, or an inward rapture of self-admiration. All this savors of self-conceit. That kind of thing, well known though it is, is a late development of human folly, and should not be confounded with the primary affections of the soul. The genuine and original self-love is the instinct that looks out for one's self. It looks out, literally: it is an active and forth-reaching impulse, laying the world under tribute for its object. It regards self as important enough to make other things serve it, and therefore it does things for self's sake. It takes care for one's own interest, and provides for one's

own necessities. It denies self, if necessary, for the sake of some dearer interest of self. Of course this may easily pass over into folly and sin, but in its place it is a perfectly justifiable thing. There is no life without it.

From this we infer, as Jesus bids, the quality of neighbor-love. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" means, "Thou shalt treat thy neighbor on the same principle as thyself. Him, too, consider important enough to be served by thy endeavors. As self-love goes out in works of self-assistance, let thy regard for the neighbor go out in works of service. Instinctively consider his interests as thou considerest thine own, and do him good as thou doest good to thyself." So the nature of self-love stamps the law of neighbor-love as nothing if not practical. It means work. It cannot be obeyed by theories of reform, or by meditation upon social duty, or by a sense of the neighbor's value, or the contemplation of his miseries, or the devoutest wishes for his welfare. Not so do we love ourselves: for ourselves we act. The neighbor-love is an outgoing affection, going out to work. It bears the other's burden, as one bears his own.

Yet the love is not for the burden, or for the virtue of bearing it, but for the neighbor. The interest is in the man. The difference is that self-love does not go outside of self to find the object of its affection and endeavors, but neighbor-love does. Hence it is a richer affection than self-love can ever become. Self-love may easily pass into selfishness, but neighbor-

love tends the other way. Self-love may easily narrow the self, but neighbor-love broadens it, or rather transfigures it. The principle of this law is the golden bond of society. When do men live together normally, and attain to the full blessedness of a common life? It is when each considers the other in the same spirit with himself, and gathers the other into such privileges of the self as may legitimately be shared. The highest that we know of social ethics is built upon this foundation.

Jesus' own illustration of love to the neighbor, given to illuminate this very law, is as familiar as anything in the Bible, though the full use of it in real life waits for a better Christianity. The parable of the Good Samaritan, called out by the question "Who is my neighbor?" does not contain the words "as thyself," but none the less does it illustrate the law. The parable shows that the neighbor to be loved is the needy one, whether acquaintance or stranger, countryman or alien, friend or foe. If he needs help and one can help him, he is the one whom this law of love intends. But Jesus quietly changes the emphasis, and so revolutionizes the law. The parable not only answers the question "Who is my neighbor?" but raises the question "How can I be neighbor to another man?" "Who then, thinkest thou, proved neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?" The one who fulfils the meaning of the word neighbor is not the man who lies bleeding by the roadside, but the man who comes along and has compassion upon him and helps him to live. The

neighbor-love is that which forbids a man to pass by on the other side ignoring another's need, but impels him to take notice, search out what can be done, and give himself to doing it. The implied counsel is, "You would help yourself out of trouble if you could: now help your neighbor out as you would yourself, and so be a neighbor." Of course neighbor-love will not always be occupied with bodily relief, as in the parable. Bodily relief is only a sample method of doing good. The problem that confronts neighbor-love to-day is infinitely more complex than the problem of the good Samaritan. But the good Samaritan's impulse is fundamental to it all, the impulse not to pass by on the other side. All sorts of relief and deliverance are thus proposed to love. The impulse to clear the road of robbers and prevent the same from happening again falls under the same category as the rescue of the perishing by the roadside. Not to pass by on the other side! what a far-reaching rule of conduct this is we see at a glance, and yet we do not really know until we have judged ourselves by it. Jesus would establish this rule of conduct wherever men live together. This is the Christian ideal, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," and this is the living heart of Jesus' teaching in social ethics.

After these glimpses of love to God and the neighbor we are ready to see what Jesus meant when he said that the second commandment is "like unto" the first. We must not fail to note that although the

two commands are both found in the ancient law, they do not stand together there, and there is no indication that they were ever contemplated side by side. The idea of setting them in company is Jesus' own. The first was well known as the first and greatest, but it was he who selected the second as worthy to stand next to it, and he alone who said that the two were alike. We can see that they are alike in at least three respects.

One point of likeness lies in the breadth of the two commands. Each deals with one of the great primary human relations, and covers one of the two great fields of life. One touches upon all that we have to do with God, and the other with all that we have to do with men. Thus they are alike in vastness, in breadth of range, in fundamental relation to all thought and conduct, all morals and religion. Together they sweep the entire field of the religious and ethical relations.

Another point of likeness is that they are both commands to love. They not only cover the two great fields of life, but cover them with one and the same motive. They bear testimony that the affection that is appointed to rule in our relation to all that is above us is appointed to rule also in our relation to all that is about us. What we do when we look up, we must do also when we look abroad: toward God and men we must bear one affection and live in one spirit. Whether we look upon our life as ethical or religious, one motive is appointed to inspire the whole. The Master might have said more than that the two laws

were alike: he might have said that they were one. Together they bind our life into the noblest of unities, the unity of an unselfish love.

A third point of likeness is that these two commandments alike are utterances of the eternal goodness, offered to us for our fellowship and imitation. These laws are not human institutions. Each in its own way is grounded in the goodness of God. Love is a stream that has its fount in him. If we love God, it is because he is so good and worthy as to claim our love and draw it out. When we know him, he is lovable; and it is in this eternal fitness that our love to him is based. And if we love our neighbor, we love in fellowship with God's own love toward him, and in filial imitation of our Father's gracious work. The better nature by virtue of which we love our neighbor with a godlike affection has come into us from the eternal goodness, and its exercise in actual helpfulness is nothing but the character of God working out in his children.

Into how close a fellowship these two laws bring ethics and religion, it is needless to say again. One most admirable and worthy law is supreme in both fields. The relations of men are dignified and sanctified by being brought into closest intimacy with the relation of men to God. Jesus placed a crown upon humanity by setting nothing above love to men except love to God, and he revealed new beauty in God by showing us that God desires men to be loved in company with himself. It is as if God had said to humanity, "I cannot be rightly loved, save as thou art

loved also." We are reminded of the marvellous testimony of the King in the great judgment scene, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

We have not heard the whole of Jesus' teaching about love to men until we have listened to what he says of love to enemies. Here he sets forth what any reader would call the extreme application of the law, and here he gives the supreme illustration of the greatness of love, and of its divine kinship. At the cost of a little repetition this teaching must be presented here, because the portrayal of the Christian ideal of human relations would be incomplete without it.

"Love your enemies," says Jesus. It is well to note that in giving and expounding this command he throws three lights upon love to enemies. First, he exhibits and enjoins what all would feel to be the extreme and most exacting form of love. Taking the perverse but natural license to hatred, he simply turns it about: "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love they neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies." This means: Let hatred perish, even in its most congenial home, and love take possession of its stronghold; let love sweep the whole field, for the perverse human affection substituting the divine. Here love demands its utmost. Next, he exhibits love for enemies in comparison with love for friends, and reminds us how morally superior it is. In loving those who love us there is no special virtue, for it is a natural thing. Sinners do that, and

for that there is no reward. But love for enemies is a higher kind of love, which nature does not produce. This has moral value. For, thirdly, love to enemies is most especially the imitation and reproduction of the character of God. God loves those who hate him, and deals kindly with them, giving them sun and rain as he does his friends; and if we love our enemies and do them good we shall be true sons to him, bearing the likeness of his marvellous grace.

Here is high doctrine indeed, and not even yet have the rank and file of Christians accepted it as true for real life. They have rested too much in the conception of mutual love, and held that to be the highest. But not only does the Master here say that brotherly love, or the mutual love of the like-minded, is not the highest love, but love of enemies ranks far higher: he assumes by the tone of his speech that as a matter of course we all see it in that light. Evidently he thinks of it as a matter of common knowledge and universal conviction. No one can question it, he implies. Here, it is interesting to note, the Synoptics stand in contrast to the Fourth Gospel and the Epistle of John. In the Johannine sources we read that the best proof of discipleship is that we love the brethren; that "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"; and that all men are to recognize Christ's disciples by the love that they have for one another. This promise to mutual love has indeed been fulfilled in great measure, for the mutual love of Christians has often stood

to the world as evidence of their discipleship. And yet the love of Jesus himself was not of that kind. He loved his enemies, and died for the good of those who had no love for him; and discipleship to such a Master cannot receive such evidence from mutual love as it can from love to enemies and help to those who hate. The cross has always been the object-lesson of such love as this, and Jesus himself is the supreme illustration of what in the Sermon on the Mount he enjoins upon others. Jesus upon the cross is the expression of the Christian ideal of love, as all Christian ages have known. Here he preaches the same doctrine that his cross proclaims, when he emphatically denies that the love of congenial spirits is the highest kind of love and appeals to common sense in support of the denial. Truly does he affirm that the highest love is love in response to hatred, with prayer in answer to persecution, and blessing in reply to cursing.

Since love to enemies occupies so prominent a place in the ideal of Jesus, it is important that we find out exactly what it is, according to his intention. About this there is no real mystery, and yet there has been abundant perplexity and misunderstanding. Some of the perplexities it ought to be easy to remove by simply recognizing that the Master did speak clearly and can be understood. If he had a clear meaning, some contradictions are ruled out. Love to enemies is not what we call brotherly love. It is not liking. It is not approval. It is not delight in the congenial. It will not make us feel toward enemies as we

feel toward friends. Many of the perplexities have sprung from the assuming of some such misdefinition. What is it, then? At heart, love to enemies is eager desire to do them good. Of course it includes a sense of their value, and a gracious and forgiving will. These are attendant elements; but love to enemies itself is the godlike outgoing of the helpful heart—or the helpful outgoing of the godlike heart. It is the impulse to bless those who curse, and to save those whom we might easily hate and leave to perish. Thus it is a saving or redemptive love, an impulse to seek and to save that which is lost; or, in terms that are entirely untechnical, it is the unconquerable desire to go and make the enemy a better man, or in any way to do him good. It is the motive of the Good Samaritan spiritualized, if there is need of spiritualizing it. Let the wounded man by the roadside be the personal enemy, or, what may be quite as hard to deal with, the enemy of all that one holds dear and sacred. Let him be the victim of spiritual robbers, overpowered by sin, robbed of his better nature, with the likeness of God almost beaten out of him. Even with all this let him be the personal enemy too. Then the love that Jesus urges cannot leave him where he is, but runs to him and labors to restore him to himself and to all welfare. Plainly this love is higher than love to the loving brethren, beautiful though that is and never to be disparaged. It is in this, not in that, that we can be sons to the heavenly Father, since he, as Paul has said, "commendeth his own love toward us in that while we were yet sin-

ners Christ died for us." For men to be perfect as their Father is perfect is to be perfect in helpful and redemptive love like this. Perfection in any other love would be perfection, but in a lower grade.

Jesus himself as the example of such love is familiar to us. No more characteristic word is recorded as falling from his lips than the prayer on the cross for his enemies and murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Neither is there any word recorded that reveals him more clearly as the Son of God. Son is like Father, and here is the Son's whole-souled utterance of the Father's redemptive love. In this redemptive love he followed life to its dreadful end, being so true a lover of men that his heart was never turned away from them by any enmity or crime of theirs. Herein he was true Son to God, whose mercy endureth forever. Gazing upon this in Jesus we see what God is, and what man ought to be—what man will be also, in so far as his sonship approaches the ideal.

One more illustration of the rank and value of love to men Jesus gives in his great parable of judgment. About the precise intent and application of this parable there are various opinions, but nothing could be clearer than its teaching about the significance of active, helpful love. Jesus is called the King, and is portrayed as the Judge of men, who assigns them to their destiny according to the character that has found expression in their conduct toward their fellow men. In this assignment of destiny active love is the deci-

sive test. Those who have performed the works of love and helpfulness with a simple and uncalculating heart, not reckoning up their merits or counting upon reward, are accepted by the King and called into the kingdom. Such service rendered even to the lowliest the King acknowledges as rendered to him, as if he himself had been the needy one. On the contrary, those who have passed by on the other side and left such works undone are rejected and sent to the eternal cleansing fire, with the explanation that he himself has been neglected in their neglect. Readers have often wondered at this test, and stumbled at it too. How was it to be reconciled with justification by faith, well known to be the only way, that men were thus accepted on the ground of helpful works? Yet certainly Jesus makes no mention of faith as the test of judgment, but only of gracious deeds wrought in simplicity of heart. But this is not strange. It accords well with what we know of the mind of Christ. Why should not love be the test of judgment, when love appears in the Christian gospel as the supreme grace alike in God and man? "By their fruits ye shall know them," and these are genuine fruits of the truest grace. Jesus would approve Paul's estimate of "faith, hope, love, these three," that "the greatest of these is love," and he would give this supreme position to no love but that which reaches out to help, like the love of God.

Love has received various definitions in the speech of men, corresponding to their various experiences with it. Sometimes it has been a sentiment of the

mind, and sometimes a selfish human desiring; sometimes an ardent approval, or a hunger for possession, or a fellowship of the heart; sometimes a passion of delight. But he who has set love in the highest place has defined it at the highest, showing us that at heart it is a passion for doing good, a self-forgetful impulse of redemption, in imitation of God and fellowship with him. This, which is the passion of God, is appointed to be the passion of his children. This is his ideal of human character. When this ideal is realized, the finest ethical grace becomes the very life-breath of religion, while divine religion is the breath of the finest ethical life in man.

VII

THE FILIAL LIFE

Following on with Jesus' presentation of his ideal, we now behold life in yet another light, and look upon it as the life of a child of God. He assumes that the right relation of man to God is that of a child to a father, and that it is both the duty and the privilege of a man to live with God as a genuine son. I say that he assumes this: he does not formally teach it or put it into separate words, but weaves it into all his discourse as a truth that he takes for granted. We are accustomed to say, in our modern manner of speech, that Jesus taught the Fatherhood of God. We speak of it as if it were a doctrine that he propounded. But that is our artificial way of describing a natural thing. He never mentions Fatherhood or puts forth any doctrine about it; but he does far better for us. He proclaims the Father. He assumes that God is Father, tells us what he is like in that character, and shows us what it is to live filially with him. The natural human sonship to God that he assumes is always real, but needs to be learned for what it is; by men it is sometimes ignored, sometimes flouted, sometimes welcomed, never perfectly recognized and acted upon;

but his gracious influence helps men to be aware of it and live in the light of it. All his teaching here is most informal. He does not dogmatize or define, but out of his heart he tells of the Father, and shows what the filial life must be, and counsels men to live it as simply as he himself does. It is the ideal life for men, and as such he presents it. In considering this testimony of his we shall have to use again some sayings that have already been cited, but they are rich enough to be repeated in this new connection.

Primarily of course the teaching about the filial life falls under the head of religion. It is the relation to God, not as an abstraction but as a living and inspiring fact, that is in view. He answers the great first question, What is God to us and what are we to God? and by his answer he opens to men life in God's family. It is there that the good life is to be lived, high and pure in ethics, fulfilling the moral ideal. Here he makes the body of life ethical and the soul religious.

Coming now to his words, we find that Jesus exhibits the inmost character of the fatherly relation in a word of rare beauty, which a reader may easily pass with less attention than it deserves. He tells his disciples that they have to do with "the Father who is in secret," and "the Father who seeth in secret." Just before directing their attention thus, he has been talking of publicity in religion and how men abuse it. The hypocrites have eyes only for that which is without: the beholders of their religion

are the men about them, whom they wish to impress by their pious works. Thus the whole transaction goes on in the wrong field. But from contemplation of the false method he now turns to the true. The Father who is in secret and sees in secret is the one true beholder of men's religious works, and to him, not to an observing public, they must have regard.

In this the meaning is that the relation between the child and the Father lies not in the open world, like the visible life of men, but is apart from sense-relations and independent of them. God is the invisible Father of the invisible soul. God whom no man hath seen or can see stands closely near to man whom no one hath seen or can see, one as invisible as the other, and the two have their most intimate dealings in the dark. It is in the invisible realm that the relation has its being: the soul meets its God and deals with him in its own dark and silent depths. It is there, we know, that the entire outward life of man is grounded: the outer life is born of the inner, and the seen is the offspring of the unseen; and Jesus points to that secret realm from which the open life proceeds as the place where the soul has commerce with its God. This corresponds to what we have learned to call the inwardness of religion. The world beholds the manifold expressions of the religious life, and may fancy itself a judge of the life itself, but it can be a judge only in part. Only One who is in secret and sees in secret can discern the actual life. To that One Jesus now gives his favorite name, calling him "thy Father who is

in secret." The acts and feelings of a Father there proceed. Man meets no stranger there, but his eternal Kinsman. There he dwells, has knowledge of his child, puts forth his affection, passes his judgments, and imparts his spiritual gifts. All the graces of the divine family—conscience, penitence, faith, hope, love, aspiration, consecration, fidelity—have their abode in that secret place where the faithful Father takes full cognizance. Religion dwells with God in the inner darkness, and there the soul finds a sanctuary inexpressibly sacred and precious. Confidential intercourse is there where no ear hears, and there, alone with the Father, the child's life is nourished. Truly the announcement of the secret Fatherhood is a veritable *sursum corda* to the children of God.

What kind of Father God is Jesus tells in words that are expounded by the common experience of life. A most gracious interpreting light he throws upon unseen realities from those that we know well. He bids us form our idea of the divine Fatherhood from the best that we know of human parents. These, although they are "evil," know how to give good gifts to their children, and have the steadfast will to do it. They will not give their children a stone for bread, or a serpent for a fish, when food is what they ask for. This understanding of their children's needs, this unfailing trustworthiness, this faithful, brooding care, says Jesus, belongs to human parenthood, imperfect though the parents are: understand that it belongs also to the divine, and in far surpassing

degree. "How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!" Thus human parenthood, notwithstanding all its faults, is presented as a true though imperfect revelation of the divine. From the best that we know in man he bids us argue up to what is actual in God, with the immeasurable "how much more" to confirm our confidence and justify our hopes. And the nature of this comparison enables us to read one delightful word between the lines by the full authority of the Master. It is impossible to confine the comparison, on the human side, to the father's part. It is delightful to think, as we must, that all the warmth and tenderness of a mother's love is gathered in with all the strength and fidelity of a father's, for illustration of the heart of a heavenly Father toward his children. It is with such a Father, generous, kind, and faithful after the human manner but far beyond it, that Jesus bids us live.

Another practical view of the Father and his attitude is given us in a saying the effect of which may easily be overlooked. Jesus exhibits God as a Father who is strict with his children, holding them to the principles of his family. After the record of the Lord's Prayer there is added a single comment by way of exposition and enforcement. It is only a single one, but probably it is a comment on the point in the prayer on which a suggestion was needed most. The disciples were bidden pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." The prayer for pardon is necessary, but what is the use of that

hard condition? for we are required to tell God that we ourselves are forgiving those who need our forgiveness. To human nature forgiving is not the easy thing that we may wish it were, and many souls have wondered at this addition to the prayer. But in the filial life with God the forgiving spirit is an essential grace. The meaning of the condition is unfolded in the single comment that follows: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if ye forgive not, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you." A hard saying this has often seemed to be, and it is indeed a searching word, as every Christian knows. But it is uttered by the Father's holy faithfulness, and to his children it is a most healthful word. The children know that their Father "delighteth to pardon," and feel themselves entirely free to invoke his forgiving grace. To this Jesus encourages them by the prayer that he teaches them, but he reminds them that the request implies an obligation. If they ask the benefit of forgiveness for themselves, they must do to others what they wish God to do to them; and they must know that God will not forget this necessity. Forgiving, they will be forgiven by him, but unforgiving, they must remain unforgiven. It is a startling word, yet not a surprising one. The Father is only holding the children to the spirit of the family. God's house is a house of grace. Forgiveness is a favorite act in the family, dear alike to the forgiver and the forgiven; but if they will not grant forgiveness, how can they hope to receive it in this family of pardon? The Father

is insistent, exactly as he ought to be, and he is doing his children a most faithful service when he thus requires them to live in the atmosphere of their spiritual home. There could not be a better illustration of a true and worthy paternal strictness. Jesus thus exhibits God as no soft and easy-going Father, indifferent to the claims of his own character, letting his children go their careless way, but as the firm and steadfast administrator of a holy household, where his own spirit is the law.

But at the same time, while he thus portrays the strictness, Jesus represents God as a Father who is appreciative toward his children. He is a rewarder, a recompenser, never unmindful of right things that his children do. The assurance of this he makes clear, though as to the manner he has often been misunderstood. "Thy Father who seeth in secret himself will reward thee," says Jesus thrice. "Openly," late manuscripts have added in each of the three places, absolutely destroying the sense. Repeaters of the tradition, and early preachers, may not have seen how the Lord could possibly mean anything else than openly, and so may have added the word in their discourses; or through the same misapprehension some copyist may have written it upon the margin of his manuscript to complete the sense, whence it crept into the text. Whoever introduced it was acting upon the ordinary view of life, for the recognition of one's merits is commonly regarded as a thing much to be desired. He could not understand a reward that was not open—that would scarcely be

a reward at all—and surely the great God would not grudge his children the joy of an open vindication. How well human nature knows this impulse toward publicity! The hypocrites were like the rest of us in that they craved a reward that showed, and how eagerly they posed in order to get their recognition! It was in rebuking this very thing that Jesus uttered the word that we are speaking of. "But thou, when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee." Nothing but profound misunderstanding could add "openly" to this. The reward will be where the whole transaction is, in secret. There is the deed to which the reward corresponds, there is the Father with his discerning eye, and there, invisible as God, is the spirit of his child, to which the reward is coming. Secret, then, the reward will be. This withdrawal of the reward from the public gaze shows us plainly enough what the nature of it must be. As it cannot be public approval or visible promotion, so it is not in any sense a reward of merit or pay for service rendered. The reward is simply the appropriate return of spiritual blessing, given by the Father to the child whose inward state is such that he can receive it. As the Fatherhood is spiritual, and spiritual the value of the work, spiritual is the reward. About this there is none of the uncertainty that hangs about public recompense. From the faithful and appreciative Father, the benediction on real and simple-hearted service will not fail. But Jesus does

not promise that the reward in secret will be known by any one but him who receives it, save as fruits of it may be seen in character and in fresh works of grace.

A more worldly doctrine of reward than this has often been attributed to Jesus, and one that resembles too much the idea that he condemns in the hypocrites. He has been understood to teach that every right deed would be matched by a corresponding recompense, given because it was deserved, open to all beholders, and bringing honor to the recipient, to be conferred at the end of the earthly course. For this some have held him in but slight honor, supposing that he really taught it, while others, too well satisfied with such a doctrine of reward, have missed the point of his most spiritual teaching.

It is true that there are some recorded expressions in the Gospels that do not agree with the doctrine of the reward in secret, and seem to promise a public reward of merit. Probably some of these, like the word "openly," simply embody the hearers' natural misunderstanding of what the Master said. In some of them he is misunderstood by modern readers, through the importation of modern ideas to the interpretation. For example, to those who are reviled and persecuted for his sake, Jesus says, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." The modern reader has been taught to define heaven as the blessed future state, and so he understands that the bliss of that state is here promised as an open reward or compensation to the persecuted for

all their sufferings. But by heaven here Jesus does not mean the future state. "Great is your reward in heaven" means "Great is your reward with God"; and the reward with God is not payment for something done; here again it is the fit return of spiritual blessing from the Father. Jesus would approve the spirit of the writer to the Hebrews when he says of God that "he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"—that is to say, they find him, and that is what he gives them as their exceeding great reward. That no reward in the ordinary and popular sense can be earned by the doing of duty, Jesus himself affirms as a matter of course in the parable of the Unprofitable Servant: "When ye have done all, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." His characteristic teaching is that no reward in the sense of payment or deserved return can be coming to a man for the doings of his life. But all the more open therefore is the field to his great idea that out of the Father's full heart flows the free recompense of spiritual blessing in response to the loyal devotion of his child. There is no reason why we should be puzzled about distinguishing between these two things. In the human family the parents do not pay the child for any service or loyalty that corresponds to his sonship, and no one supposes that they return to him a reward of merit. Such a thing would be out of all keeping with the true relation of parent and child. Nevertheless they reward him, and do it in a manner whose richness beggars the whole idea of payment, and the

child is aware of the meaning and value of the reward. Even so, according to Jesus, the heavenly Father does.

A spiritual Fatherhood, then, better far than the best that humanity knows, in which the Father is strict in his ethical demands and yet appreciative of all that his children do in loyalty—such is the relation between God and men that Jesus tells us of. It is implied at every point that the Fatherhood is suffused with love, while it glows no less with the strength and beauty of holiness. This is the realm of divine religion, and in this atmosphere Jesus would have us live our ethical life. Surely there is no worthier ideal of life than this. And now, having had the Father set before us, we may turn to the other aspect of the relation and listen to Jesus while he speaks of the children of God, and the life that they live in this divine atmosphere.

That the life of the children with God is a life of prayer belongs to its religious character. In any living relation with a living God, prayer is a matter of course; but when the relation is a filial one, prayer becomes a vital and tender thing, and the character of prayer becomes a fact in ethics. Necessarily the character of the Father gives color to all filial praying. Holding up the contrast to the praying of the hypocrites, intended for the ears of men, and with that of the Gentiles, framed with many words and useless repetitions, Jesus says to his friends, "After this manner therefore pray ye," ye children of God, to whom is open the privilege of praying to a Father.

Remember to pray as members of his family, as true children ought and may. Pray quietly, the world shut out, the soul alone with God. Speak to him as a Father who is acquainted with you: remember that he knows what you need before you ask him. Therefore you will not need to explain everything in order that he may understand your case, neither do you need repetitions to impress him, or many words to influence him. Gentiles, not addressing God as Father or accounting themselves his sons, may suppose it necessary to beg of him with much iteration and volubility. But it is not so with God's children, who pray to a Father who knows them better than they know themselves.

The familiar prayer to which this exhortation was a preface was not meant by Jesus for a liturgy or an exclusive form. In a life of spiritual reality there can be no such thing as an exclusive form of prayer. God, who has the heart of a Father, cannot require or expect any single manner of praying, and upon men who pray as his children no exclusive form can be imposed. Filial praying may accept forms, but cannot be bound by them, for it will change with the changing need; and the natural variety is exactly what the Father wishes to hear. The address of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father," is a charter of liberty in praying, for it opens the way to naturalness, and the children's freedom is sure to claim its rights. This prayer that Jesus taught to his disciples is a filial prayer, wonderfully true and comprehensive in its expression of the normal desires of God's

children. It is a prayer of the children rather than of a child, though an individual may offer it. If an individual does offer it, he offers it as one of the family, for there is not a clause in it that does not imply the existence of a common life in which the individual is a partaker. It is plain that the normal desires of the divine family are here. First comes the plea for the hallowing of the Father's name, the coming of his kingdom and the doing of his will by men; and then follow requests for the Father's provision, the Father's forgiveness, and the Father's protection for all whom the prayer represents. Devotion to the Father and reliance upon him are the religious elements in the prayer, and the ethical elements are the spirit of forgiveness and the desire to be delivered from sin. If "Thy will be done" were regarded as a prayer of submission, as it often is, perhaps the prayer might breathe a minor tone. But it is a prayer of aspiration, and of consecration too, and it rings in the major key. When the children pray that the Father's will may be done and his kingdom come, they pledge themselves to the bringing of his kingdom and the doing of his will. Not only does the prayer breathe filial trust: it glows with filial loyalty.

Jesus proceeds to give further account of the filial life, and in so doing he unfolds the meaning of trust and loyalty, the principles to which the prayer gives expression. In the discourse that follows they are so interwoven that it is impossible to treat them

separately. With him, it would appear, there is no good loyalty without childlike trust, and no genuine trust that does not work itself out in the spirit of loyalty. It may be that we think of trust in God as a religious element in life, and loyalty to him as an ethical. If we do, then we shall say that in this teaching ethics and religion are perfectly interfused.

This closer view of the filial life is introduced by the declaration that men must discriminate and make their choice between the earthly and the heavenly, between human treasures and divine. The soul's treasure must be laid up not on earth, where possessions quickly perish even if thieves let them alone—not here, but in heaven, where all is abiding and secure. Treasure committed to God is safe. The man whose treasure is laid up in heaven is not the one who has value stored in the future as in a bank, to be drawn and enjoyed by and by—for here again "heaven" is not the future life. He is the man who has made abiding choice of God and all that pleases him. As to the choice, either worldly good or this divine treasure may be a man's dearest own—either of them, but not both. Mammon, which is an old name for wealth, stands for the whole of this earthly deposit, which includes much besides mere money, while God stands for the whole of the heavenly choice. To God and Mammon it is impossible to be equally devoted: one will certainly outbalance the other; wherefore between the two there must be a decisive choice. Not that wealth and godliness are necessarily incompatible, but the two dominant loyal-

ties are. To God, as against the supremacy of the worldly significance of life, the soul must take the oath of allegiance and hold it fast.

This choice of the higher loyalty may seem a dangerous choice, but it will not prove to be dangerous when it is accompanied by the higher trust. Choose the heavenly, says Jesus, and have no fears about the earthly. A hard saying, replies the hearer; it would be most sweet if it were not so hard, but a hard saying it is. Have no anxiety? What is to still the heart's anxiety in the midst of the earthly necessities that cannot be escaped? Who can wonder if the question rises and will not down? But the answer of Jesus is that the heavenly Father himself is to still the heart's anxiety. In making the loyal choice one trusts himself with God, and goes out of his own keeping into the Father's hands; and Jesus testifies that it is not only right to be there, but safe and good. The wisdom of such confidence he justifies by illustrations most beautiful. The heavenly Father is he who feeds the birds, cares for the grass, and clothes the lilies of the field with splendor. Men are far more precious to him than birds or flowers, and when he beholds them responding to him with trustful loyalty, he will not disappoint their confidence. Gentiles, not having discovered the soul's true kinship, may naturally devote themselves to the earthly good with all their might, since they have their own way to make; but as for the children, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

But trust and loyalty go together. It is not to an unethical and inactive confidence that Jesus gives this benediction and promise. A condition is attached. The filial confidence implies the filial loyalty. The condition is, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." A true child of God does not simply lie down trustfully upon his grace. With the first choice of his soul he adopts God's moral ideal and devotes himself to the answering of his own prayer, "Thy kingdom come."

This great condition has been sadly misconceived. The seeking of the kingdom of God has often been taken to be seeking entrance to heaven hereafter, and the seeking of his righteousness to be seeking justification in his sight by faith, or even a righteousness that he may give through imputation. By such defining the passage has been very largely confined to the personal range, and attention has been held to individual destiny. But this is far from the thought of Jesus in these words. To seek the kingdom of God is to devote one's self to the endeavor to establish the kingdom of God in this present world; to seek his righteousness is to strive to possess in one's self and establish in the world the right character and life that God delights in. When we remember what the kingdom of God is, and what righteousness is, we perceive that the seeking of these implies a life of consecration to the highest good of any and all men, and to the bettering of the human race. The work is a social work, and for one who adopts it it is a life-long work. All the relations and activities of life lie

within the field of his endeavor, and his aim is to help in bringing them all, or any of them, under the sway of God's kingdom and righteousness. It is plain at a glance that this is work of loyalty to God, for it is directed to the hallowing of his name, the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will. But it is no less a work of trust in God. The profoundest confidence in God is not shown in lying down to be carried by his grace, although in its place this is a worthy form of confidence. In so far as we need to be simple recipients, this is a right form of trust. But the profoundest confidence in God is exercised when one accepts his will as worthy to be done at all costs, lives loyally as his child, and labors to revolutionize human society in the spirit of his kingdom. One who takes his life in his hand for God's sake is the one who trusts him, and one who trusts him fully will gladly take his life in his hand for his sake. Loyalty and trust imply each other. If Christendom takes the command to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness as a summons to seek personal welfare, it sadly misses the point of the Master. It is a summons to take part in the divine enterprise of making all things new.

By saying "All these things shall be added unto you," Jesus implies that the loyal soul is in the hands of God and may trust him with all its needs. But he seems also to mean that the shortest road to the supplying of all human necessities is the coming of God's kingdom and the establishment of his righteousness as the law of the common life of men. The kingdom

is so good and the righteousness is so right that when they come in the common needs will be supplied. The kingdom means that the necessity of each is the concern of all, and the righteousness implies the same. Human society will never be either happy or righteous until the kingdom comes.

The loyalty for which Jesus calls is to manifest itself in innumerable ways. The spirit of the Father is to be lived out in the life of the children. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." "Love your enemies, that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." "Be merciful, as your Father is merciful." "Ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world." The work of loyalty is suggested more than it is described. Jesus would have it carried far beyond the expressions of it that he mentioned. He never can have supposed that the counsels that fell from his lips told the whole duty of man, and still less can we suppose that our fragmentary record shows it all to us. Not even Jesus could possibly unfold the whole duty of man in the filial life, for the filial loyalty has a thousand forms, and finds new expression in every new age and field of action. It means just as much in the parts of our life that we do not call religious as in those to which we give that name. The kingdom and righteousness of God cover everything. Jesus wishes to raise up for the world a host of men who are utterly loyal to their heavenly Father, and who trust him so absolutely as to be sure that the way of loyalty is always the safe and blessed road.

Both the church and the world have suffered much from reading these counsels in the wrong atmosphere. There have been two errors. Now and then some one announces that the Sermon on the Mount describes a life that is noble in ethics but not conspicuously religious. This was once a somewhat common impression, and we may find it still, in some who think that the ethical life may be well lived by itself, without much help from religion. But nothing could be farther from the truth than the finding of this utterance non-religious. The filial life that is here set forth finds its motive and inspiration in the vital relation of man to God, and in nothing less than a free life of faith and love toward the invisible Father. But the opposite error has been far more hurtful, because more common. Too often these commands and counsels have been taken as technically religious altogether, and read in the light of an individualistic piety. They have been accounted to be counsels of inward religion, belonging in the same region with meditation and personal penitence and the aspirations of the individual soul. Some even say that religion is all between God and the soul, and does not directly go any farther: of the fellow man and society it takes only indirect cognizance. How plainly social these requirements are, how sharply they apply to the actual relations of life, how impossible it is to obey them except by attention to the way men live together—these things are thus overlooked, to the great spiritual impoverishment of Christendom. The individualizing of Christianity was an unavoidable necessity in its time, and has served a necessary use in history;

but at present it is holding larger ideas in abeyance, and is postponing the victory of Christ in the universal field. The time has come when a broader understanding is an absolute duty.

With the social application thus in mind, we may be surprised at one fact. Modern Christians say much about the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Some are inclined to erect these two as the pillars at the front of the Christian temple. The two thoughts are natural companions, and when Jesus says so much of the Father, we may be surprised that human brotherhood is so little upon his lips. Of "thy brother" he sometimes speaks, but not in a manner to show that he habitually thought of the relation of man to man in this form. Only hints in that direction appear. Probably, however, it was best that the second thought should be left to grow in due time out of the first: it would be more effective so. So far from discouraging the second by not making it prominent, he planted the seed from which it was sure to grow. If God is Father, men are brothers, and true filial life toward God will turn out to be fraternal life toward men. Fraternity is the Christian ideal. All the teaching of Jesus naturally works out in a life of brotherhood. Fellowship with the Father promotes it, and the brotherly life in turn will enhance the preciousness of the Father.

We have been looking at Jesus' portrayal of the filial life, but, clear and vivid though this is, it still remains true that his greatest contribution to our

knowledge of the filial life has been made in his example. Greater than his words is his life, for in this he enables us to see what it is for a man to live as a son of God. When we look at what we know of the life that he lived, we find the filial spirit expressed in its most characteristic forms, namely, in love and loyalty and confidence. We see Jesus delighting in his Father, loving to commune with him, spending nights in prayer and days in service, rejoicing to make him known to men as he is and commend him to their confidence, finding his own joy in that life of spiritual reality which holds one heart to heart with God. And, what goes deeper still, we see how he accepted his Father's will and held it supreme; how he accepted it not only as a will to be adored or to be endured, but also as a will to be done by him and accomplished through his efforts. Loyally trusting God, he consecrated and committed himself absolutely to the work that his Father had given him to do. Accordingly he went through life not downcast and submissive, as we sometimes imagine him, but in manly and courageous fashion, not fearing the face of flesh, resolved only to fulfil his mission in the world of men. He stands before us as the perfect type of a son's warmth of spirit, glow of affection, and joy in fellowship, and of a filial devotion in life and death that is not mere humility but the co-operation of a loyal heart. Moreover, we see him living not only for his own soul and his Father, but for the world into which he had been born. He lived for men. He was a social being, one of his race and people,

bearing the common burdens. He was the prince of helpers, contributing himself daily to the common good, living and dying to bring the kingdom of God, laboring to bring on the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Theology has its metaphysical doctrines of the person of Christ to account for the sonship of Jesus to God; but doctrine, after all, is only the explanation of fact, and no analysis of his person can ever afford such proof and illustration of his sonship to God as resides in the life that he lived and the death that he died. In everything God was Father and he was Son; and thus he has given us living evidence of what it would be for God to be Father to all men, and all men to be sons to God. This is the ideal for the world—that all men in their widely varied life should be animated by the filial spirit that made Jesus what he was in the filial life with God.

The key to the true filial life is found in unity of character between Father and Son. Such a life comes not from a sense of duty or from deference to commands, but springs from profound oneness of heart with God. A son of God is one who is at least on the way to become perfect with the Father's perfection. The decisive fact is that he is like-minded with the Father. In Jesus this character-unity, or moral fellowship, was complete, and so he illustrates in full measure the normal relation of man to God, and the normal life of goodness. The Christlike is the truly human. Shall we say that his full fellowship with the Father was due to his moral pu-

rity, or his moral purity to his full fellowship with the Father? Concerning him we need not labor to solve the question; but concerning ourselves we know that we shall be in closer fellowship with the Father in proportion as we become free from sin, and in turn shall become more free from sin in proportion as we live in deep communion with the Father and in loyalty to his will. This is the way of the filial life.

Some of us can remember when it used to be a question whether the example of Jesus was really imitable. This was not because we saw how beautiful the example was, and knew that we and all men were incapable of the like. In the common teaching of the time he seemed to be set so far away from us, in a personality so radically unlike our own, as to be out of our class entirely, in a life that lay beyond the reach of our imitation. It is true that his example was offered to us, in the preaching that we heard, and yet we could scarcely feel that the offer was genuine, his distance from us was so great. We were often told, indeed, that we must not expect really to resemble him. But the day of such impressions is passing. Jesus is imitable. It is true that his pre-eminence will not be taken from him by any successes that we may win. But we sadly misunderstand him, and our own life also, if we suspect that anything in Jesus places his filial example beyond the reach of our imitation. We need the revealing light of the ideal to show us that nothing good is beyond the reach of imitation. All ideals are imitable, however unattainable they may

be. The goodness of God himself is imitable. How truly imitable Jesus is we see at once, as soon as we remember what is the point in question. It is character. In his life the motives and inspirations that should govern human beings are set before us, and a life that resembles his will rise toward the one ideal of us all. The unity of heart with the Father that gave character to his life is open to us through the divine grace that he made known. We must not lower our actual ideal by imagining that the highest is not for us. The perfect ideal should draw us on, not only to admire it but to make its likeness our own.

VIII

DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL

Jesus, honest and true, taking men as he found them, knew them as involved in moral evil. That they were sinful he recognized as a fact. He did not discuss the nature of evil, or offer any contribution to the philosophy of it. He gave no light upon its origin or the extent of its sway. He never spoke of original sin, or represented men as totally depraved: on the contrary he constantly implied by his appeals that there was good in men as well as evil, and enough of good to make it worth while to appeal to them on the highest grounds. Nevertheless he steadily represented men as so involved in evil that escape from it was a necessity. Indeed, if one understands at all the life that Jesus proposes, it is evident that it implies a change great and radical from the ordinary state of mankind, and that the change consists on one side in an escape from the control of evil. That life is so full of goodness that one cannot live it without having been delivered from the evil dominion, and the fulness of the new life must depend upon the degree of the deliverance. Escape from evil is the way of entrance to the good. In Buddhism, the escape from evil, which is the one thing desired, is an

end in itself, and nothing lies beyond it except the negative blessedness of release, however this may be idealized. With Jesus the escape from evil is the means and manner of entrance into character and life in which the ideal of existence is intelligibly fulfilled.

As to the nature of the evil in which men are involved, Jesus sets aside all suggestions of externalism like ceremonial defilement, and passes by all ideas of hereditary depravity, and declares that the evil is moral, and is within. "From within, out of the heart," he says, proceeds the evil that works genuine defilement upon a man. Thence proceed evil thoughts; thence also the various impurity that works out in crimes against society, and thence such personal traits as the common judgment justly condemns. That is to say, the evil from which men need to be delivered resides in the realm of character. We may call this a very obvious statement, which ought to be unnecessary; but it was not superfluous in the time of Jesus, and is not superfluous yet. Men are prone to locate their evil somewhere else than in their real selves, and imagine that they owe it to some external influence. So they do, of course, to some extent, for the hurtful influences are many; but deliverance from the hurtful influences would not be deliverance from the real evil. There would still remain in every man a real centre and secret of evil, in his own heart, the seat of his character. Wrong character is the trouble. The man is not what he ought to be. So

Jesus testifies, and so testifies the common experience. The question of human evil is not at bottom a question of misfortune, but of ethics.

Since the human evil resides in the realm of character, the escape from evil must consist in a change of character. There is no other way out. From such evil there can be no escape except through change from bad character to good. I am not speaking now of escaping the consequences of evil, or of the various helps to deliverance, or of the consequences of the deliverance, but only of the deliverance itself; and what I mean is that the deliverance itself consists in the cessation of the quality in the heart that makes it bad, and the opening of a fount of goodness there instead. It was the mission of Jesus to make better men. This was so evident in his day, and has been so evident ever since, that it ought to be unnecessary to prove that the deliverance which he proposes consists in change of character, the new making of man. Various forms of doctrine have tended to conceal this truth, partly by couching it in technical language, but we must not allow it to be concealed.

Since the evil and the escape reside in the realm of character, we are not surprised that Jesus did not rely for deliverance of men upon anything that does not affect the character. Deliverance from evil is an ethical work: of course it is, for the evil is ethical. There is no place in Jesus' plan for deliverance from evil by any process of a magical nature, or by any method that does not imply a moral experience. No

priestly act can effect it, or do anything toward it except through influence exerted in the moral realm. Jesus has declared that no defilement of a ceremonial kind can make a man unclean in the sight of God, and he would equally hold that no external act of any kind can do anything toward cleansing him of his evil. Externals do not reach to where the evil is. No such thing as baptismal regeneration is conceivable within the circle of Jesus' ethical and spiritual ideas. The evil that resides in character must in character be put away, and the work that transforms character must be inward, intelligent, experimental, reconstructive. Only in actual living experience can the escape from evil be made. There are external helps that are invaluable, but they are helps to the experience of the soul, and only as such do they forward the work of deliverance. All the teaching of Jesus about escape from evil is practical teaching, and is ethical in the fullest sense.

The central point of this teaching appears in the saying attributed to him in the conversation with Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel, "Ye must be born again." If the words are translated "Ye must be born from above," as they may be, the meaning remains the same. Entrance to the kingdom of God is a new beginning: it is the entrance upon a new life, worthy to be called a new birth. Of course the language is chosen for an illustrative purpose, and is figuratively used: it is not to be pressed as if it were intended for literal description. We must not attempt to bring in all the analogies of birth to com-

plete the interpretation. The point is that the kingdom of God postulates a change so radical as to be a new beginning of life. The reason is that the kingdom is not of this world, while men are. Here again the change is an ethical change, a transformation of character. No reader ought to be able to doubt this. It is not something that is wrought upon a man, but something that is wrought in him. Hence it is not probable that Jesus said that a man must be "born of water." "Born of the Spirit" is characteristic of him, but "born of water" is not. This allusion to baptism as indispensable to entering the kingdom, and as even an element in the new birth itself, is probably the contribution of a later time, when baptism had begun to be accounted necessary for salvation, an idea utterly opposite to the thought of Jesus. According to his conceptions the new birth could be nothing else than a personal entering into the spirit and character of the kingdom of God. This is of course an ethical change, but an ethical change wrought in the spirit of religion: it is a birth at once into a new relation to God and into a new character. As all ethical work is with Jesus religious too, so the new birth of character is truly a birth from above. The new-born man is born of God.

Many definitions and detailed descriptions of the new birth have been proposed, but they disappoint us if we expect much from them. An external description of the new birth is obvious, but an internal description is impossible. The process must be as various as human nature and life, and it is incredible

that any formula of it is at our disposal. If we follow the light that we have from the mind of Jesus, and equally if we are led by experience, we shall not undertake to tell just how the new birth must come to pass, or by what particular set of signs it must be evidenced, or to decide, save as large tests of character may inform us, whether any given person has experienced it or not. The field of life is too large and various to justify such dogmatizing. The sum of the matter is that if a man is coming into the kingdom he must be born into the spirit of it. Such a birth from above, ministered by the Spirit of God, means transformation of character. The process may be swifter or more slow, and will be great in proportion to the need of change. About the method of it there can be no rule. But it is obviously true that through such a new birth the escape from evil must be made.

As to the human side of the deliverance from evil, we find that Jesus tells us of some elements that enter into it. One of them is Repentance.

The word is not often quoted from him in the Gospels, but the idea is always on the surface or just below. His whole claim implies it. At the beginning of his public work he found the word ready for his use and at once adopted it. John the Baptist had made the land ring with the summons, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and it is recorded that Jesus began his preaching with the utterance of the same call. "Repent, and believe in the good tidings," is the earliest exhortation that is

attributed to him. It was well understood in Israel that repentance would be essential to participation in the blessings of the kingdom when it came, and it was a common belief that God would delay the manifestation of his kingdom until Israel was penitent enough to receive it worthily. However unspiritual many of the popular notions of the kingdom may have been, this was a thoroughly wholesome ethical idea. Repentance was necessary, as every one knew, and when the Baptist declared that the kingdom was at hand, no one was surprised that he threw his whole soul into the cry, "Repent," or that his baptism implied the confession of repentance. And if Jesus discerned the spiritual quality of the coming kingdom better than John, all the stronger was the reason why he should take up John's word. The more spiritual the kingdom, the more urgent the demand; and as we listen to Jesus through his ministry we see that he never came to a moment at which this was not the very word that suited his purpose.

This living context of the earliest preaching reminds us of what repentance really is. If men are to enter the kingdom of God and live its life, they need to come in true sincerity out of the moral state in which they are unfit for it. The repentance to which Jesus called was the state of mind and will in which a man would forsake his sins. It occurs whenever some holier power has taken sufficiently controlling hold upon the soul. The holier influence says, "Come away from your evil," and the soul, seeing the evil somewhat as it is, comes away—not perfectly

at once, for that is a work of time, and yet with a genuine will of abandonment. Repentance is the son's coming to himself in the far country and setting out to go home to his father. Both are included, the inward awakening and the homeward turn, the change of feeling and the change of will, the revulsion against sin and the leaving it. Both are right and necessary, and the first is incomplete without the second. The experience may be painful and even full of agony or not, as the case may be. The will to abandon sin may rend the soul, or it may bring the joy and exultation of release, or it may be a quiet resolve that does not stir the depths of feeling. It may well be painful, for it naturally includes a more or less impressive sense of guilt for the past that is now forsaken. The pain is the element that has been most talked about, and repentance is often defined as sorrow for sin. But the sorrow is of variable amount, and its significance is secondary, the main point being the action. Thus conceived, repentance is not a solitary event in a life, a step taken once for all and finished, for higher principles ought always to be showing us the evil of our inferior ways and drawing or driving us out of them, and such change in us will always be covered by Jesus' idea of repentance. Repentance is simply one part in our response to the upward call, and Jesus would have us repent as often and as long as there is anything to be repented of.

Though the word is not very often used, evidently the call for repentance is a primary note, sounding through all the teaching of Jesus. It fits perfectly

into his view of life, and permanently. The duty and privilege are axiomatic. Repentance is a part of the ideal, for a sinful man cannot become right in any other way; no repentance, no rightness: no breaking off the worse life, no entrance to the better. If the time ever comes when men are no longer sinful in heart or living below their best, repentance may cease, but not till then. It is no part of the ideal for the perfect God, but it is absolutely the ideal step for a sinful man to take. The kingdom of God is always at hand in some form, coming and to come, and it always remains true that if men are to receive it and enter they must be changed into its spirit. The experience will be endlessly various, and yet in its inmost meaning it will be always one.

In the deliverance from evil a true companion to repentance is Self-denial; and this also Jesus insists upon as indispensable. The philosophy of its position is very simple. The difficulties of sound moral and religious life are not all on the outside, as we sometimes wish they were and try to think they are. If the enemies were all without, the warfare would be simpler. But for the purposes of sound living, and of escape from evil, the man who must be the actor is unsteady, fickle, and untrustworthy, and part of the time at least he makes inward resistance. It often seems as if he were divided and there were two selves, a higher and a lower, one upreaching and the other dragging down. So strong is this appearance that the actual division of the man has often been held as

a Christian doctrine. But there is no division in the human constitution. The personality of the man is not divided between good and evil, but his character is, with the result that by his own will and act he now aids and now resists the demand of the right and filial life. The same self does both. Of course the upward reaching is the normal action, to which alone hope and destiny belong; in this alone is the true ideal of life: wherefore the self must be encouraged in this and denied its false luxury of dragging downward. Hence the Christian duty and privilege of self-denial, and hence the Christian definition of it. A man must deny and resist himself in his downward leadings and doings, that he may bring his powers into unity and steady work, for promotion of the higher ends. Self-denial is opposition to one's own opposition to the good, with sacrifice of any self-interest that would forbid the holy attainment. The downward insistence is apt to be strongest when some self-interest is involved, though this may sometimes seem quite innocent, so that to deny the downward self may imply much self-sacrifice. But plainly it is a necessary part of self-mastery.

Jesus gives various exhortations to self-denial which serve to illustrate what it is. Rather than be led into sin, he says, cut off a hand or pluck out an eye, and cast it away; sacrifice anything that is an occasion of stumbling, however precious. We have already seen how impossible it is to take this literally. Self-mutilation cannot stop sin. As he said of food, so he might say of bodily organs, that their work

"entereth not into the heart." But the Master's urgency is none the less for want of literalism. The will to be good should be strong enough to sustain a man in any sacrifice that is necessary for the accomplishment of his object. Anything that does "enter into the heart" with its evil influence and corrupt the real man must go, though it be as indispensable as hand or eye. Any honest hearer must feel that this is a perfectly reasonable demand.

"If a man come after me," he says again, he must "hate his father and mother and wife and children and brethren, yea, and his own life also." The natural affections appeal tenderly to the heart, but one must prefer that which Jesus stands for to them all, and must sacrifice them all and turn against them if they thoroughly resist him in his Christian loyalty. Not that Jesus considers these affections valueless or unworthy, or that the relations that inspire them deserve to be hated; and not that there is any virtue in hating them for its own sake. It is just because they are so noble and precious that they are here brought into comparison with that which transcends them. There is only one thing above them, and that is loyalty to God and truth and righteousness, and for this a man is to sacrifice them all if he must. The Christian choice, which is the same as the sound ethical choice, is a very simple and radical one, for it is neither more nor less than a choice between the best and the inferior. If a man really finds himself clinging to friend or kinsman as against God, and there is no other way out of it, it is reasonable to

say that he must deny himself and sacrifice the friend.

Again, "If a man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." To Jesus the cross, symbol of death, was the burden appointed by the Father, to be borne and not laid down. Every disciple must follow him in the same spirit of loyal obedience in which he bore his destiny of death. It is not meant that every disciple must expect to die for his sake, for that was not true when the words were spoken, and has never been true since. But whether the burden assigned by God be death or anything else light or heavy, the disciple must bear it after Jesus; and as in Jesus' case, the bearing of it must be so much a part of his very self that he would go to death rather than surrender it by lowering the high aim and abandoning the ideal. Self-interest or the love of ease may resist the acceptance of it and rebel against the load, but the disciple is to deny this resisting self and loyally carry the burden.

To the rich young man Jesus said, "Sell all, give to the poor, and come, follow me." An exceptional test, no doubt, for the circumstances that determined the form of it would not often occur, but not exceptional in principle. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," and the young man himself was choosing the wrong master, although he did not know it, and so his self was to be denied. So strong was the hold of his wealth that only a great renunciation could set him free to eternal life, which he thought he desired. Indeed he did desire it, in part, but his real self was

on the other side. So this call for a drastic self-denial, bitter as it seemed to him, stands in no contrast with the winning invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," but is simply one form of it, adapted to this special case, and showing this man by what means he must enter into the rest. And though the test seems exceptional, what Jesus added about the difficulty of rich men's entering the kingdom shows that he regarded very many as in need of a self-denial that would break up the whole tenor of their life.

In all this we must note how sane and reasonable is Jesus' idea of self-denial. According to him self-denial is always for a purpose: it is a means, not an end. It is never for its own sake, as if there were independent virtue in the very act, or as if human nature and its desires were fit only to be trampled on. Self-denial, like repentance, is a natural and necessary part of the way from evil to good. In making that great transition, a man will have to deny his own wrong self-assertions and resist his wrong resistances, all for the sake of the end in view. Christians have too often missed the Master's point and looked upon self-denial as somehow an end in itself. Human nature has been disparaged and despised, partly because it was so low and little in comparison with the divine, but more because it was thought to be totally depraved; wherefore it has been counted a virtue to contradict its desires and trample upon all that pertains to it. Sometimes men have been told that self must be denied just because it is self, which

has no rights. But all this is far from the thought of Jesus. We remember how he said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," blaming no one for loving himself in proper measure. Jesus knew nothing of any essential contemptibleness in human nature—did not he himself bear it?—or any unmitigated sinfulness in men. His idea of self-denial is quite separate from such considerations. He sets forth a great end to be attained, worthy of the utmost human endeavor, and inspires us to feel that for the sake of this it is an honorable, wise, and happy thing to contradict the self that refuses the best good—the contradiction being intended, of course, to bring the resisting self to terms and teach it the better way. This is the only principle on which he calls for self-denial—that the end requires it and deserves it. Self-denial is self-rectification: it is effort to get the self in hand.

Here appears the Master's rationality. This is simply the common and reasonable doctrine, raised to a high power. Self-denial is no specialty of Jesus and his religion, or of religion at all. It is one of the oldest elements in life. All religions of any earnestness have called for it, and apart from all religious considerations it is one of the commonest things in the world. Love knows it well, and so do all other powerful passions. Parents deny themselves for the sake of their children, and individuals for the good of society. Men are always denying themselves, or turning back resisting impulses and setting aside conflicting interests, for their own advantage, for fame or wealth or pleasure, for lust or revenge or

appetite, for love or beauty, for charity's sake, for patriotism, for a cause whether good or bad, for the satisfaction of an ideal. There is hardship in self-denial, but all the world knows what it is to welcome the hardship for the sake of the end in view. Jesus asks no more than worldly or selfish interests have always asked: he merely takes the common principle and applies it to the supreme need and interest of man. What men have always been doing, and expected to do, for the sake of ordinary ends, he now bids them do with all their hearts for the highest. When Jesus looks out upon his ideal he indeed beholds a world involved in evil, but he sees men struggling out of the evil by their best endeavors, and gladly beating back and conquering every impulse in themselves that would prevent them from coming out into the free activities of the kingdom and family of God.

Thus far the deliverance from evil may appear to be wholly a matter of ethics, a work to be accomplished by man himself; for repentance and self-denial look like purely human works. But it would be a great mistake to think so. Jesus does not lead men to expect the escape from evil to be made through repentance and self-denial, or through any action of their own, taken by itself. The part is not the whole, and the human part, while it is indispensable, is secondary. God's part is primary, and but for it the deliverance that Jesus proclaims would be impossible. He locates the experience, so to speak, in the realm

of religion, as truly as in that of ethics. This is the glory of his message of salvation.

Jesus conceived of himself as the messenger of the helpful grace of God, who had sent him to seek and to save that which was lost. This God had done because the saving of men from sin was the object dearest to his heart. All the doctrines of free grace that his apostles developed were but unfoldings of the fundamental truth that Jesus himself proclaimed. He taught men to rely confidently upon God, who is beforehand with them all in the matter of deliverance from evil. He labored to leave no room for doubt that God is eagerly interested in making men good and right. He loves to pardon all who come to him, and he delights to renew the heart and life. If men are brought over from evil to good, it will be because his unbounded desire to deliver them has had its way; for antecedent to all deliverance from evil is the grace of God. His heart is set on this, and only when he accomplishes this is he satisfied concerning men. Jesus would make men know that it is God's nature to be a Saviour, and lead them to construct and govern their life in view of such a God. His doctrine of the attitude of God toward the sinful, as a Saviour God, was partly known through Hebrew prophets who had obtained glimpses of the truth, and yet when he proclaimed it it was almost new in the world. It came as a revelation, and it is still a revelation of incomparable importance to mankind. It still needs to be proclaimed aloud to Christendom, for in various ways it has been astonishingly

obscured. And yet it belongs not only to the ideal of Jesus, but to any ideal with which humanity has a right to be satisfied. The true ideal of life must conceive of men as embraced in the comprehensive care of a God whose joy it is to do them good, and who cannot rest without delivering them from evil.

Of this most inspiring truth concerning God we have the classical illustration in the so-called Parables of Recovery. These parables have had a large place in the appeals of religion, but have never yet fully come to their own in the field of theology. Their teaching has been so effective in religion, partly because it came straight out of the real life of Jesus himself in contact with sinful men, and partly because it is so self-evidencing in its testimony concerning God. Publicans and sinners, drawn to repentance by Jesus' influence, are welcomed by him with gladness, and scribes and Pharisees find fault with him for treating them so well. But Jesus answers to the effect that at any rate God is glad of their coming to him, and all ought to join in his rejoicing. Human beings who have lost what belongs to them seek it eagerly, he says, and rejoice when they have found it, and make no secret of their joy, but want company in it. The shepherd seeks his sheep, the woman her piece of money, and both call upon their neighbors to rejoice with them when their search has been successful. The father is on the watch for the returning of the son who has gone astray, and makes great rejoicing when the wanderer, having learned the true lesson of the far

country, has come penitently home. By these pictures Jesus represents the attitude of God toward men in their sinful alienation from himself. The men are his own, and he does not give them up though they have gone away from him: he desires their salvation, seeks them, welcomes them when they come, and joys over them when they are with him again. Only ungracious souls, portrayed in the unlovely picture of the elder brother, will refuse to rejoice with God over one sinner that repenteth. Such a God as this, Jesus would give men to understand, is the God with whom they have to do.

This free and helpful grace toward the sinful, and man's acceptance of it, are variously illustrated in Jesus' dealings with people around him. He goes out of his way to seek Zacchæus the publican, and Zacchæus responds to the divine endeavor to bring him to a better life; whereupon Jesus bears witness to God's acceptance of the man, and testifies that "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The sinful woman in Simon's house comes with a passion of weeping to answer Jesus' call with penitence and a holy consecration, and is bidden go in peace, with her many sins forgiven. In the parable the publican casts himself trustfully upon the willingness of God to be merciful to him a sinner, and is justified. In all this God has drawn out faith in himself as the Saviour of men. It is not called faith, but faith clear and simple shines out with divine beauty in this free response and self-commitment of sinful beings to the grace that saves.

In these narratives, and elsewhere in our records, bright and joyful emphasis is laid upon the presence in God of the forgiving heart. In the Lord's prayer, Jesus implies that God is always ready to receive and grant his children's request for his forgiveness. The father's forgiveness is voiced in his joy over the returning prodigal. "Thy sins are forgiven thee" is the word of blessing to the paralytic before he is healed. No condition to the divine forgiveness appears in the teaching of Jesus, except that the sinner must be turning away from his sin, and that the one who seeks for pardon must be giving his own pardon to others. The conditions are all ethical in their nature—that is, they are such conditions as the moral nature of forgiveness requires; they are not conditions devised, but conditions inherent in the case. And they are all on the human side, so far as Jesus bears witness. He represents the divine forgiveness as flowing forth freely wherever there is a soul that is morally prepared to receive the blessing. God's heart is free and his way is open. Nothing outside of God and the woman appears to have been required to justify the pardon of the sinful woman in Simon's house. Whether he thinks of himself in ethical relations or in religious, the sinful man who is minded to forsake his evil way is encouraged by Jesus to do precisely what he was long ago exhorted to do in the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah—"Let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

In this testimony about deliverance from evil

through the grace of God Jesus gave an inestimable blessing to humanity. Two dangers beset men when they are awakened to their need of deliverance from evil. On the one hand, they know that their own effort is indispensable to the result, and may easily imagine that it is sufficient too. Indispensable it is, Jesus tells them, in its own place, but not sufficient, for they are bound by real ties to God. But, on the other hand, if they feel that the case is serious because sin is so great, they may shrink in fear from God, since they know him only from afar, and are uncertain of his willingness to save. Most suspicious of him, indeed, they are apt to be, and incredulous about his grace. That they are dependent upon the grace of God, Jesus does not let them doubt, and the sufficiency of that grace he sets in the clearest light. Knowledge of the free saving God is his gift. He sets the human endeavor, necessary but secondary, in its true relation to an all-embracing love.

In this he lays down what Christians are beginning to dare take as a fundamental truth of religion, and of ethics too. The human life, personal and general, is lived within the friendly circle of the divine life, and from the eternal good-will there flows perpetual encouragement to all right aspiration and endeavor; consequently, what no human endeavor could effect the divine grace is freely accomplishing—men are delivered from evil. The past is forgiven, the household of God becomes their home, and power for all sound life is imparted to them. The ideal of Jesus includes not only men struggling away from evil by

their best efforts, as we have seen, but men struggling thus because God lives and works; men sustained in their endeavor to escape from evil by a sufficient and unfailing grace; men escaping and escaped into the righteousness of the family of God. By this revelation that we have our being in the atmosphere of divine help, Jesus stands as the minister of hope to all human striving after goodness. And since God is one and the same to all, Jesus is the minister of such hope not to a few men only but to all men, and his gospel, the proclamation of the real God for the helping of the real human need, is a gospel universal, adapted to all mankind.

IX

LIBERTY

From the comments that Jesus made upon some events we may draw a clear doctrine of liberty, and one that is of the very substance of his ideal. We do not know that he ever used the word, but he did set forth the thing, and the conception is so characteristic of him that when once we have grasped it we can never again detach it from the body of his teaching. It is a permanent doctrine too: in spite of all changes in the conditions of life it still stands firm and is of the utmost value to-day.

The background is the situation of his own time and country. The conditions of life were not favorable to personal independence and self-direction, but rather to spiritual bondage. Doubtless there was much religion of the better kind in the quiet life of the people, and among leaders too, but in the ruling religious scheme there was small room for genuine liberty, such as the best life in ethics and religion needs for its atmosphere. Legalism was the only orthodoxy. In the whole law the voice of God was heard: it sounded in the additions that had been made by interpretation, as well as in the parts that were regarded as original. The righteousness of scribes

and Pharisees, gained by obedience to specific commands, was what the people were taught to believe in and to seek, and in order to obtain it of course they must keep the whole law. The result was a minute supervision of conduct. Either a man kept the law or he did not, and if he did not his free intercourse with God was supposed to be interrupted. Conformity to the external parts of the law was most easily tested, and therefore received the most attention. Thus in all the matters that were most vital to his spiritual welfare the law, not the man himself, determined what a man should do; and it was mainly an outward law. Independent judgment was ruled out. Loyalty to God was loyalty to a system of commandments. A man had no right to judge for himself as to anything on which the law had spoken. He ought to be governed by his conscience, but conscience meant sense of duty to keep the law: otherwise, conscience did not come into the account. Strict lawkeepers saw no good in any kind of life but this, even though it were a more spiritual way. "This multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed," is quoted from scribes and Pharisees. Yet naturally there might be among the "accursed" multitude some who were really more religious than those who despised them.

Jesus lived under this system, and understood it well, but legalism was altogether strange to his life and thought. He once directed a leper whom he had healed to obtain from the priest a legal certificate of his restoration to health, in order that he might be

free to resume his place in society as a well man; but this was an act of mercy, not of legalism. There is no record that for himself he ever performed any act of ceremonial obedience, in the time that the Gospels cover, or paid any form of legal deference to the law. As for his disciples, we shall see how he inspired them very early to a new kind of practice. It was indispensable that he should, if they were to be his disciples indeed. The system in which they had been reared did not tend to make them independent moral agents. It gave no frank encouragement to free personal action, the independent work of real character. It made something else than a man's conscience the judge of what he was and did. But against the legalism that thus omitted the conscience and suppressed the soul Jesus proclaimed a genuine personal liberty and openly set his friends at work in making use of it. He never called it liberty, or gave it any name at all, or formulated any doctrine of it, but liberty it was, and nothing else. He was well aware that to claim it for himself and encourage it in others was a most heretical thing, but he paid no heed to that, and went squarely in the face of the orthodoxy of his time in practising and encouraging liberty.

There is a very striking illustration in his answer to an inquiry about fasting. Certain Pharisees, and certain disciples of John the Baptist, observed that his disciples did not fast, as their own authorities required and as they supposed all true religion must

require, and asked Jesus why. It is interesting, and surprising too, to note that the disciples were not questioned about his practice, but he about theirs. They were the transgressors—whence we can only infer that under his influence they were already acting in personal independence in turning away from some of the prescribed fasts. He defended them, and gave reasons, first why his disciples did not fast, and then why they should not be required to fast.

His reason why his disciples did not fast was that at that time fasting was not suited to their condition. He showed it by a kind of parable. "Can the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them; and then will they fast, in that day." As if he had said, "Fasting is a fit sign of sorrow, but their life with me is joyful, as at a wedding feast. Not until they mourn the loss of me, the bridegroom who gladdens them, will fasting suit their case. When it suits their case it will come of itself." Possibly the half-parabolic manner of this utterance concealed a little of its radical quality; but if his hearers understood him they knew that he was giving an independent and radical re-estimation of an institution that was authorized by the law. He dared to say that his disciples would fast of their own accord when it meant something to them, but need not fast until it did. Till it has significance in their life they "cannot fast"; that is, they cannot perform it as a rational and sig-

nificant act, and therefore it is not required of them. If we were to state the principle that underlies this, it would be, "What cannot be done with meaning is not required." Thus an established service of the law is taken entirely out of the category of acts that must be done because they are commanded, and counted as an act that is to be done when it has meaning enough to make it worth doing. In determining what a man is to do, his condition is ranked above the law, and his own judgment is set to decide the question. The law calls for fasting, but the man's condition does not: the man decides not to fast, and Jesus justifies him. What liberty is this! A man is made the judge of his own conduct, and is approved even though his judgment decides against that which the law requires.

This first part of the answer brings the disciples out from under the ancient law, and sets them in a free and independent life. As Jesus himself has brought them out, it is plain that their new life is to be under his influence; and in the second part of the answer he tells why in this new life there can be no requirement of fasting. Here he uses a pair of illustrations. We are wont to read him so solemnly that perhaps we scarcely dare to notice the gleam of humor in his picture of the old clothes and the new patches on them, but it is there; we should see it too in the picture of the wine-skins, if we were accustomed to wine-skins. The point is that the old system to which fasting belongs is like an old garment, while his own new method of life is like a piece of new,

strong cloth; the old system is like weak old wine-skins, while his new spirit is like strong new wine. He is not here to patch up the old, or to save it from too great a strain. If he were to put his new life on as a patch to the old Jewish system, it would neither match nor hold, but would make a failure every way. If he were to put his new vital force into the enfeebled Jewish order, something would break. New ways for new powers. The free life must have its own modes. Fasting as an act of religion belongs to the old order of outwardness and routine, not to the new kingdom of the spirit. The new movement of life wants other forms of expression.

The two parts of the answer fit together admirably. The first sets fasting in its proper place in a voluntary life such as he is leading men into, and the second expressly claims that of such a life prescribed fasting is not a congruous part. If a man feels that he must fast he may fast, but it becomes him to have a good reason for it. And he could not better illustrate the great principle that the Christian life is not a life of response to legal dictation. Under Jesus, legislation is not the method. He is not introducing a law. The old legislative method does not correspond to his free spirit, nor would it be competent to hold his new spiritual power. His life is the life of the spirit, and liberty of spiritual judgment is the atmosphere in which it must have its being.

Perhaps Jesus made an even more startling declaration of liberty when he took up the subject of

ceremonial cleansings and defilements. Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem, orthodox of the orthodox, observed that his disciples omitted the washing of their hands before eating—a washing for the sake not of cleanliness, but of acceptableness to ceremonial requirements. Noticing the fact, they asked Jesus to explain it. Here again it is the Master who is questioned about the disciples, not the disciples about the Master, as we might have expected. On this point of legalism also they must have begun to change their practice under his leading.

In his first answer Jesus calls attention to the fact that the legal tradition that requires all this handwashing is not from God, but from the "elders," the men of old time. It is a part of the law made by interpretation. It is a sample, he says, of many matters in which the legalists have frustrated God's genuine requirement by claiming his authority for some act or custom that he has not required. "Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast to the tradition of men"—and for this confounding of things that differ, this mixing of human with divine, he blames them bitterly. Even within the inherited law, he implies, they ought to discriminate, and keep God's word and man's apart. Evidently he would insist that his followers should be free at least from the obligation to obey the human additions to God's law. This was as bold and offensive a word as the word about fasting. What he said was that in the law which all the orthodox insisted upon there was a part that was not from God, and that it was the duty

of teachers of the law, and of those who were to obey it, to discover that part and cease to hold it as binding. What! criticise the ancient and accepted law itself, written in the Scriptures, and exercise moral judgment upon it, and cast part of it away? But that was what Jesus was insisting on.

But he is not content with this, and must needs go on to tell what he thinks of the principle of ceremonial defilement itself, quite independently of its relation to the divine command. Calling the people around him, he proceeds to confirm his great doctrine of liberty by heretical and revolutionary statements of the most astonishing kind.

In his estimation defilement is a real and a dreadful thing, and he wishes his hearers to be right, not wrong, as to what will bring it on them. It is real, but it is not ceremonial. To the people he gives the gnomic saying, "Not what goes into a man, but what comes forth from him, works defilement upon him." When his disciples ask for explanation he tells them, in effect, that whatever the law may say about clean and unclean foods, there is nothing in it. There are no clean and unclean foods. Food cannot defile. Food simply passes through the body and is gone. It is of the body and of nothing else, and having served the purposes of the body it perishes. The decisive fact is that it "entereth not into the heart," the seat of the personal moral life, for which reason it is nothing at all to the real man, and has no power to defile him. When real defilement occurs, as too often, alas! it does, the heart is the fountain and start-

ing-point of it. Out of the heart, the inner life, comes forth sin, with its various impurities and injustices and evil passions. If you are looking for defilement, look not to food but to living evil in the heart for the source of it. You will surely find it there.

How revolutionary this was, we in our Christian atmosphere can scarcely imagine. The writer of the Second Gospel, rightly perceiving what was meant, added, outside of all grammatical construction, as if in meditative amazement or else in a triumphant sense of liberty, ". . . making all foods clean!"—declaring worthless all the old distinctions between foods that defile and foods that do not, and forever ending ceremonial embarrassments as to what one may eat. All foods are free. The syllogism is very direct and conclusive: The heart alone is the source of purity or impurity before God; food does not affect the heart; therefore with purity or impurity before God food has nothing to do. The same reasoning would apply to the formal necessity for hand-washing, and to all supposed defilements under ceremonial law. They are all relics of an immemorial unspiritual faith, which makes God mindful of a thousand external matters. But Jesus' principle is that only the spiritual and ethical is essential. If it is said that this is perfectly obvious, we must reply that it is very far from being obvious everywhere among Christians even yet, and that at the time when Jesus spoke it was absolutely heretical. Only by the boldest claim of intellectual and spiritual liberty for himself could Jesus have uttered these

words at all, and only by the boldest claim of practical liberty for men as men could he have given this forth as a principle for all to act upon. On that day he avowed for all time the position that the spiritual and ethical, to the exclusion of all that is formal, external and ceremonial, is the sole test of acceptableness in the sight of God

From another point of view Jesus taught the lesson of liberty when he opened to his followers a noble freedom with reference to the use that they should make of the Sabbath day. The disciples, walking with their Master on the Sabbath, hungry, helped themselves to handfuls of grain in the field as they were passing through. Thereupon certain Pharisees, observing it, charged them with breaking the Sabbath by harvesting and rubbing out the grain, and asked Jesus about it. Yet the third time it is their conduct, not his, that is called in question. Their strictness must have been loosened in many ways under his influence. The plain impression of the record is that they took the grain in all simplicity, just because they wanted it, not thinking of any law.

Jesus' first reply is a reference to the Scriptures, made as an *argumentum ad hominem*. He cites from the life of David a ceremonial irregularity with regard to the temple, evidently not condemned at the time of it, and recorded without censure in the Old Testament—as much as to intimate that a rational interpretation of the law of sacred things is no novelty, and the Pharisees might have known it. But his

real answer strikes to the heart of the matter by going straight to the nature and purpose of the Sabbath itself. What is this Sabbath, he virtually asks, about which your scruples know no limit? and what does it exist for? "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." In the hard and merciless legalism that was now catechizing the disciples, the Sabbath was treated almost as if it were an end in itself and a separate object of devotion. On one day in seven it seemed to be esteemed the one thing needful that the Sabbath receive no detriment. Legislation was strict, interpretation was stricter, and the keen watchfulness of the guardians of the law was strictest of all. The result was that man was made to feel that this sacred institution was more important far than he: whatever became of him it must be honored, and he must almost account himself to have been made for Sabbath-keeping. But this most orthodox position Jesus dares to withstand. The rule works the other way. The Sabbath, he declares, was made for human benefit. By a man himself and by all who have anything to do with the regulation of his life it ought to be treated as a servant of man, not as his master. This ought to be the ruling idea of the entire community. No law has a right to invert this relation and set the means above the end, and no interpreters of the ancient law have a right to read into it the inverted meaning. If Jesus were expounding the matter further, of course he would say that men ought to use the Sabbath wisely, not recklessly, not selfishly, or irreligiously,

or unmindfully of him who gave it. Not only to the benefit but to the best benefit of man ought it to be devoted. Only a high-minded use of the day would correspond to his ideal, and all the stronger is his position in view of the high value of the blessing. So inexpressibly valuable a servant of man is this, that no one ought to deprive him of its service by setting it up as his master.

What use Jesus himself made of this freedom with the Sabbath all readers know. "The Sabbath was made for man" might be called his motto. He performed public acts of healing, and when they were challenged by legalists he defended them vigorously. The meanness of the opposition to such healing angered him, and once is recorded his indignation as he looked round upon the leaders in the synagogue who were forbidding him to make more of man than of the day. He declared that healing on the Sabbath is merely such work as men do for their cattle, which they will feed and water and help out of holes on the Sabbath. How much more appealing ought human needs to be than the needs of an ox or an ass! No sacred law or custom has any right to check such work. So he willingly stood as a violator of the Sabbath in the estimation of Jews who perverted the law; but he claimed that in what they called profanation of the Sabbath he was only bringing the day to the filfulment of its purpose. According to the report in the First Gospel, he clinched the argument in defence of the men who plucked grain to eat on the Sabbath by this tremendous argument from ancient prophecy—

"If ye had known what this means, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." God long ago put the inward above the outward, the spiritual above the formal, likeness to God above offering to God: his heart was set upon the ethical grace of mercy, not upon the ceremonial act of sacrifice. Because these religionists had failed to see this vital message glowing in their Scriptures, they had that day condemned the guiltless and called good evil. But Jesus himself was now acting upon that ancient divine valuation, and opening to all men the liberty to prize mercy above sacrifice, the end above the means, the work of life above the methods of life, as God does.

By such treatment of the institutions of the sacred law Jesus opened to men a fine personal independence; or, rather, he asserted for them their original right of liberty. How radical he was! He taught men to criticise the law that they attributed to God. He declared null the principle that underlay the ceremonial system. He assigned to religious institutions their true place as servants of man, and thus taught men to seek their value in a new quarter. He pointed to the heart as the sole seat of that which is acceptable or unacceptable to God, and thus bound upon men the responsibility of taking care of that which is within. By such teaching he impressed the lesson that we are not to suppose that a thing is right because it is commanded in the law, but must understand that so far as the law is good a thing is commanded in

the law because it is right. As an appeal to the conscience and a test of what ought to be done, he distinctly deposes the force of legislation from the first place and sets above it the value of the law. In all this—and perhaps this is the most radical teaching of it all—he bids men freely act upon their own judgment of good and evil, even where the ancient and sacred law has spoken. Even to bitter opponents he is recorded to have said, "And why even of your own selves judge ye not what is right?" In morals men can judge, have a right to judge, and ought to judge. Thus he sets personal judgment free from prohibitions and constraints; and the right of judgment is the very life of the gift of liberty.

In fact, just as the writer to the Hebrews afterward testified, the gospel of Jesus brought fulfilment of the prophetic hope of a new covenant, of which one great characteristic was to be that the law was written on the heart. We have seen that his doctrine of righteousness was simply a doctrine of reality: the required goodness must be the man's own, a quality of his very being: a man must be himself, the self being a good one toward God and men. God's requirement must be not an external authority but an inward guide: he must know the law not as engraved on tables of stone but as impressed upon his own inward affections and thus made his own. But one of the conditions of inward reality is liberty. In order to be himself, a man must be free to be himself. He must be unhampered by false authorities and repressive forces, and unrestrained in putting forth

his best in thought and work. Accordingly we do not wonder that Jesus preaches liberty so tremendously. Liberty belongs to the substance of his ideal. Without it his ideal man can never exist. With it there are risks and dangers, but with it there are opened all the possibilities of high virtue and godliness.

Jesus never discussed this gift of liberty, or described it at all, or even spoke of it as a separate fact. His impartation of liberty to his disciples was wholly practical and informal. He did not exhort men to be free, but started them in a free life. Therefore we should look in vain to him for an explicit statement of the principle in which liberty is grounded. But in view of his general attitude and influence the principle is perfectly plain.

His view of liberty is a direct result from his steadfast conviction of the relation between God and man. Jesus always assumes that there is only one above the human soul, and that is God, the Father of men. To him each man belongs, and has access, and is responsible. To him men are so related that all duty is duty to him—though not to him alone—and all life is life under his paternal authority. Above man there is no other. Between any human being and God there stands no one whatever with any binding authority over conscience and will. Since all life in its higher character, ethical and religious, is a matter between man and his God, God is the only possible master for men, and filial allegiance to him implies release and freedom from all others who claim au-

thority. The one mastership of God annihilates all other masterships. Immediate relations with God imply emancipation and liberty for man. This is true not of some men only but of all, since God is the same to all, and all are bound alike to him by this liberating tie. This is the liberty which Jesus claimed in his own life. The high aim to which he held so firmly was the aim of loyalty to God alone, and no other authority over him did he acknowledge. This too is the liberty which he proclaims to all who learn of him. He thus blesses mankind by restoring to every man an essential human right and privilege, clearing earth and heavens of all intermeddlers who would come between man and his God.

Of course it will not be understood that the claim of his fellows upon a man is in any way diminished by this sole mastership of God. No man liveth unto himself, or has a moment's right to think that humanity has no claim upon him. But the call is of another kind; and it is as a free spirit, answerable in the higher sense to his God alone, that a man is called to serve his fellows and fulfil his obligation to them.

Neither will it be understood that the sole mastership of God is incompatible with various forms of social authority that exist among men. Parents have authority over their children for a certain time and within a certain sphere, and governments have authority over their people for certain purposes. But such authority is of a wholly different kind. It rests upon relations that exist among human beings themselves, no one of whom has naturally anything

of the higher authority over another. Thus it is differentiated entirely from the authority of God, who is himself alone, and before whom all men stand alike. Moreover, it is valid only within its own special field. Within a certain range human authority has force, but it does not extend into the region of God's sole mastership to rival him. When it endeavors to invade that field it exceeds its rights and must be ordered back where it belongs. Human authority has often claimed to represent God and exercise control over judgment and conscience and will, but never rightfully. When it comes to a matter of conscience, or of judgment as to what is true, or of the exercise of moral choice, there is only one way. The apostles were right when they deemed it sufficient to reply to the Sanhedrin, "We ought to obey God rather than men"—by which they meant, as they ought to mean, "The Sanhedrin does not stand between us and God, and we owe to you no duty at all in this matter." This is the right rule for all. The Christian liberty is freedom from all masters but God.

When Jesus proclaimed the emancipation from human mastership which is implied in loyalty to God, he gave to the world a gift of priceless value. We have to confess indeed that Christians have arisen to this liberty only in a very imperfect way, and have often been sadly false to the principle of it in their treatment of one another. Very largely the lesson has still to be learned. Nevertheless, in spite of all defects, Christian liberty has done in the world a

great and beneficent work. Many souls that acknowledged God have found themselves set free from other domination, and have claimed the right to ignore all interference with his requirement. In such experience the fear of man has met its master, and the best in the soul has come to its own. The way has been opened for godliness to live above the world in a higher fidelity, for honest thought to discover and proclaim truth in all realms, and for loyal hearts to do the will of God without reserve. The command, "What ye have heard in the ear proclaim ye upon the housetops," has become a rule of life, and the whisper of God imparting truth has been fearlessly transmitted to the world. The value of this superhuman freedom in actual accomplishment of good for mankind is past all computation, while its force by way of example, inspiring souls in bondage to come forth into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, has been a gift almost as great. Every freeman of God is a missionary of freedom.

It is worth while to note that this fine liberty of the soul is not only an ethical gift but a religious gift as well. It is well known in modern times, and is increasingly admired, but is not always traced to its real source. The finest and manliest personal independence of our age, which all recognize as a part of the ideal manhood, is often thought of as a product of human free institutions. Its growth is greatly indebted to them, but in a deeper sense it is the offspring of loyalty to God, which abolishes all spiritual bondage by giving the human spirit only

one master. It is Jesus who goes to the heart of the matter with regard to liberty. Under his influence it is not to be regarded as a gift of man to man, or a lesson learned in a human school, though in a true sense it may be both of these. He grounds it in religion, by making the soul's loyalty to God the key to its freedom from domination of men. Thus for our time as well as for his own he lays in religion the deepest foundation of one of the great ethical gifts. Many have enjoyed the fruit who did not recognize the nature of the tree on which it grew; but the ideal personal liberty is a result of loyalty to God. It is well to note also that in religion Jesus here offers us the solution of a great social problem. When we speak of liberty we speak of a social fact, and the question of liberty is a social question in any age, for it is a question of what men really are to one another, and in what manner they ought to live together. It is an inspiration to know that Jesus offers the solution of this social problem not primarily in the relation of men to one another, but in the relation of all of them to God. This surely is the ideal way. The heavens rule. God, not man, is the key of life.

X

HUMAN VALUE

The farther we go into the teaching of Jesus, the more does the great social question open about us on every side. Plainer and plainer it grows that his ideal was a social ideal. We may enter the kingdom of God by the individual door, but the kingdom itself is a social realm, where the question of what man should do toward man requires the heartfelt attention of every citizen. We need not wonder, therefore, but should be most thankful, that the counsels of the Master extend their application till they cover the whole social field.

One of the most far-reaching of ethical questions is that of the value of a human being. How high an estimate ought to be put upon a man, simply as a man, or upon a child as a potential man? Of how much worth is a human being? How ought one to regard his own value? and what valuation ought men to put upon one another? According to their mutual estimate will be their treatment of one another; and in the history of the race it has become only too plain that to misjudge human value is a sadly dangerous thing. We may never take the question of human value to heart, or we may think too meanly of our fellows, or we may prize them highly,

and these judgments will have large social effects and immeasurable importance. These are vast ethical questions, and in proportion as we are acquainted with the living God we shall call them religious questions also.

In a variety of ways Jesus teaches us what a human being is worth, and how we ought to estimate men. Here again some words that we have already studied will be found yielding an additional lesson, and it will not be a loss of time to draw it out.

He calls attention more than once to the value of men in comparison with lower creatures. The grass of the field, the lilies, the birds, the ox, the ass, the sheep, he brings into comparison. For all these he says that God cares, and how much more for men! Men care for their animals too, and will take great pains to supply their wants and get them out of danger. Hard-hearted religionists around him he begs to take as much interest in the welfare of men as they take in the care of their cattle—and he begs in vain. The lesson as he gives it is, "God cares for these—the sheep, the sparrows, even the flowers—and how much more valuable is a man than a sheep! God recognizes the greater human value, and so should you." To our eyes as we read it this may seem like very rudimentary teaching, and an extremely rudimentary standard of human value, too obvious to be of any practical worth. But hard experience proves that in teaching humanity to man rudimentary lessons are far from superfluous. Even yet they are needed. Many a man's employees

would be thankful for such consideration as he gives his horses, and many a man's family is housed worse than his animals. And very beautiful and cheering is this teaching of Jesus concerning the fatherly heart of God, who rightly estimates the value of all living creatures and holds his human children precious above the rest.

The teachings that illustrate liberty throw equal light upon human value. When he compares men with sacred institutions, and relegates the temple and the Sabbath to their true position as servants of humanity, Jesus places high honor upon man. He quotes, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations"; the temple then, often accounted sacred for its own sake, was intended to be a servant to mankind, both Jew and Gentile; wherever man is, therefore, there is something greater than the temple. How he sets man above the Sabbath by saying, "The Sabbath was made for man," we have already seen; and he does not hesitate to put this word into personal application. "Ought not this daughter of Abraham . . . to be healed on the Sabbath day?" She is the more important. As the sanctity of the showbread did not stand in the way of satisfying David's hunger, so that of the Sabbath must be no bar to usefulness toward men, for whom it was made. Since man is the being for whose good God made all holy institutions, in his sight he ranks above them all. This is not represented merely as Jesus' personal judgment. He records it as the judgment of God, expressed in his preparing of the holy institutions for the service

of man. In God's judgment the end ranks above the means.

The three great Parables of Recovery, which have taught us so much about the divine love, convey also the clearest of lessons concerning human value. In these three parables of "the lost found," which declare with ascending emphasis that it was right for Jesus to welcome as he did the publicans and sinners, the worth of a human being shines forth. Why was it a good thing for these men and women to come to him seeking a better life? and why should they be welcomed? Because of what they were worth. They were worth saving for their own sake, and they bore a real value to God, whose they were. Because of the saving of this intrinsic value, as well as because of the victory of the divine love, is there "joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." The scorning of such by the Pharisees is represented in the parable by the elder brother's name for the prodigal, "This thy son, which hath devoured thy living with harlots." But the father's name for him is, "This thy brother."

We do not find Jesus calling attention to his own sense of human value, but his life showed it in many ways. His disciples apparently thought that little children brought to him for his blessing were too insignificant to hold his attention, but he rebuked their unwelcoming spirit, and received the children with warmest interest. When he was asked why he companied with sinners, he replied that he was a physician, and these were the ones who had need of

him. As a physician of course he must go to his patients, and he went freely and gladly, never questioning that they were worth all the pains that he took for them. That sinful men were not important enough for him to serve them with full devotion never occurred to him. It was by way of comment upon his one day's work with Zacchæus the publican that he uttered the immortal saying, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." That which is lost, he implies, is worth seeking and saving: men are precious. If Zacchæus had not responded to his search on that first day, it is hard to think that he would not gladly have given him a second. His own ideal was to seek the lost "until he find it"—the only satisfactory way. Most emphatically again did he tell of human value when he said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Not for himself would he live and die, but for men, and it was worth while. We may think that he said this because "not for self" is the right principle for life and death; and so he did. But if the objects of his unselfish sacrifice had not appealed to him as worth the cost, he would not thus have given himself for them. His self-sacrifice even unto death was his measure of the value of the men for whom he gave himself. The cross bears testimony to what he felt humanity to be worth. From this high judgment of human value he never swerved. He had his moments of impatience with the slowness of the response—"How long shall I be with you?

how long shall I suffer you?"—but neither by the hard way to the cross nor by the agony of the cross itself was he turned from the conviction that men were worth the sacrifice. Even in the hour of death his murderers were still to be prayed for.

Another light upon human value is given in Jesus' suggestion of the value of a man to himself. A man is worth more to himself than all the world can be worth to him. To gain the whole world would be no gain if he lost himself in the transaction. If a man has thus lost himself, there is nothing in all that he possesses, even if he has gained the world, that is valuable enough for him to "give in exchange for his soul," to buy himself back again. "What shall it profit a man" to have made such a bargain? In the parable of the foolish rich man, the moral is that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." Nearer home than that must he look for that which counts. It was when God required of him his soul that his trouble came. He himself was the centre of interest then, and all his wealth, prized for the comfort it was to bring him, was nothing worth. If he could not stand up to meet this last call of God, all was failure.

Very suggestive concerning a man's real value are the words in which Jesus tells how alone this value can be realized or conserved. They are paradoxical and searching. Self-seeking will prove a disappointment. "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall save it." A man is precious in a mystery, and only

a deep experience can bring the mystery to light. He must die to live. He can make himself of full value only by letting himself go in self-forgetful consecration. Only by the sweet though costly rule of self-sacrifice can his value be fully realized. It will be wrecked and lost if he follows the selfish method. Only when he surrenders himself to the holy cause—"for my sake," for that which I stand for—can he come into true possession of himself. If man were a being who could secure his own value by making it his end, this would be a very different world from what it is. It might be more attractive to the ordinary soul, but heaven could not be brought into it. But the actual law of life is the law of surrender. So in the case of Jesus himself: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." The value of a spiritual being resides not merely in itself, but even more in what it brings forth. So even of God. If he were a selfish seeker of his own glory, he would have no glory. Of this paradoxical and yet rational nature is the value of a spiritual being, and therefore of a man.

Jesus did not represent value as belonging to a few men only, or to some special class alone. He would never lead us to think that God prizes merely the select few, the finest spirits of the human race. He encourages none to think themselves God's favorites. He saw the worth of despised men, and brought out undiscovered values. Men are unequal in many respects, and of unequal value for many pur-

poses, but Jesus assures us that they are all precious to God, who counts them his own, sees their possibilities, and prizes them for what there is in them. The parables of recovery do not point a limited or temporary lesson. They show how everywhere and always God rejoices when the value of the human comes back to him. Accordingly the lesson of the value of man as man, and so of all men, remains in the world as an element in the ideal of Christianity. It is needless to confess that this lesson has barely begun to be learned and practised in its full meaning, and yet it is true that the Christian era is the human era, the age of man. Despite the terrible defects and wrongs that still remain, with Jesus there has come a sense of human value such as the world has not known elsewhere; and when we obtain a glimpse of Jesus himself we do not wonder.

It is easy to see that in proportion as Jesus becomes influential in the world, the sense of the value of man will be increased. Of course, too, the law of human value cannot stand as a mere formula or an abstract estimate. It must have applications of vast importance. It is a law of self-respect. We do not hear Jesus speaking of this, but he taught the lesson as no one else has done, and has inspired a self-respect that may almost be called a Christian grace. Since a man is so precious, every human being ought to respect and even to reverence himself, and to attend to his own higher duties and interests in a manner that corresponds to his value. It is not self-conceit that

says, "Because God prizes me I will prize myself." And of course the law of human value is a law of respect and reverence toward other men. It should be this to every one who looks his brother in the face. We sin against our fellows, and against God who prizes them, if we do not treat them all as beings of high worth. As an ideal for life, Jesus made this absolutely plain; and yet how slow are even the best to make application of it, or even to perceive that application must be made! And society in general has obtained only faint glimpses of this ideal.

It is impossible to discuss here the applications of the law of human value, but the nature of them is plain. The law is both destructive and constructive. It tears down and it builds up. Give it its way and it tears down all that belittles man and treats him as of small account. It seals the doom of tyranny in government. It condemns all social tyrannies and oppressions, and all institutions that deal with human beings without high consideration of their worth. All scorn and contempt of men, even of evil men, it would abolish. All practices that embody contempt or indifference toward men it would doom to blasting, unless they change their tone. And in the place of tyranny and contempt and wrong, it would bring in an order of large and equal justice, of fraternal sympathy and helpfulness, and of equal opportunity. A social order that corresponds to the Christian ideal of human value is the order for which human welfare waits. The form of it may not be foreseen, but the spirit of it is as plain as the character of Jesus himself.

Here we may remind ourselves how perfectly the ideal of human value fits in with Jesus' ideal of the kingdom of heaven. There he showed us an order inspired by the spirit of mutual help and service. Here he points us to the companions whom we are called to serve and help, and bids us see how well worthy they are of all that we can do for them. In a world of human value the life of mutual service is the normal life, and the redemptive love of God is the right spirit to inspire all living.

Jesus could not discuss the problems of our time in his, and so he has not given us specific directions what to do in view of human value. We must find out for ourselves what we need to unlearn and repudiate, and what new works of social righteousness we must learn to do. The time has come when we ought to be learning, for the vast social issues have arisen, a Christian people has grown up that ought to be capable of dealing with them, and every day is clamoring more loudly than the last for attention to the claims of human value. There is no more vital question. Industrialism is wellnigh omnipotent now, and industrialism knows little of large intrinsic value in human beings. It recognizes their value only for some single purpose, in which they may serve the interest of those who exploit them. A man comes to be called a hand. Life comes to be organized without reference to the intrinsic value of human beings who cannot organize it for themselves. The money-making impulse is the organizer, and the money-making impulse is always ready to utilize

men as means to its end, whatever other values in them it may destroy. In dealing with human beings the Master's word is true, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." To serve God is to deal with all that is human as worthful and honorable in itself and for its own sake: to serve Mammon is to ignore the higher values and trample them under foot. A Mammon-worshipping generation invokes the curse of God by its contempt of humanity.

The significance of the present social strifes turns more upon the question of human value than upon almost any other. Human value and selfish interest are in a death-grapple, and the thing needful to a righteous outcome is that the voice of Jesus be heard. Evidently the contest will be long. The work of righteousness in making adjustment must needs be slow, and will require the utmost wisdom and patience. Selfishness will propose all manner of injustice; and, on the other hand, the worth of men is sure to be asserted sometimes in unwise ways, so that interest in its righteous claim will be discouraged through mistakes. But it is indispensable to a good future that the Christian ideal of human value be kept in sight, and taken to heart, and held as the guiding light in all social changes. Only thus can the true ideal of society be reached, or even approached. The practice of human value is essential to the fulfilment of the hope of the world.

XI

JUSTICE

VERY close to the ideal of human value lies that of justice. In one aspect, indeed, the claim of human value is a claim of justice: men have certain claims on one another by reason of their worth, and justice demands that they be honored. But besides, in all human affairs there is such a thing as reciprocity—give and take—and there is a way of exercising this reciprocity that is just and equal, corresponding rightly to the conditions. There can be no definition of justice that will make plain what is just in every particular case; it is the task of every person, and of society, to study that out, and to act upon the conclusions that may be reached. But it does not follow from this seeming indefiniteness that justice is a vague and uncertain thing. The principle is perfectly clear. Justice is that which is due according to the claim of right. It is a mere repetition to say that the doing of justice is every one's duty.

In our day one who emphasizes justice is apt to dwell much on the rights of man, or of men; for in recent centuries the assertion of justice has largely been identified with the assertion of rights. But perhaps to our surprise we find that of the rights of men Jesus did not speak. His principles may lead

to assertions about rights, but he made none. In this omission he made no mistake, for that was not the message for the hour. If he had stood forth as a herald of human rights, he would have missed the point of his mission. He was not in the world for immediate social reform. He was to create a force that would work reform in its season, but its season would be long in coming, and the work of his lifetime was of another kind. But apart from such consideration, agitation for human rights was not the most natural thing from his own point of view. To him duties, not rights, were of first importance. Not "What can I claim?" but "What do I owe?" is the first question for a right mind to ask. It was characteristic of Jesus that he inspired men to do justice before he moved them to demand it.

His largest teaching upon justice, as well as the clearest illustration of the judgment that has just been cited, is found in the law that he announced when he said, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do, do ye even so unto them; for this is the law and the prophets."

This word is commonly known as the golden rule, and the name is well deserved. In the popular thought it probably passes oftenest for a law of love, but as soon as we examine it it appears as a law of justice. It recognizes that two sets of requirements are present, and bids me equalize them. I wish another to treat me in a certain way or in a certain spirit. But he has the same claim upon me that I

have upon him, and his claim I ought to acknowledge. What I desire from him he has an equal right to desire from me, and it is only just that I give to him such as I ask from him. The rule takes two forms. Negatively, I ought not to do to him what I wish him not to do to me, and positively, I ought to do to him what I wish done to myself. The two requirements may or may not coincide in precise detail, but they entirely coincide in spirit. Plainly this is the righteous and equal rule for the management of that reciprocity which enters into all human relations—give as you would receive, do as you would be done by. In order to do this satisfactorily it may be found that love is indispensable, but the claim springs primarily not from love but from justice. The law calls only for what is equal, fair, right, just: it ought to be fulfilled. It is well called a golden rule, for it is a rule of righteousness. In so far as it is ignored, there can be no effective righteousness between man and man, and no sufficient rightness in personal character.

Jesus adds at once that this is no new rule, and he lays no claim to it as a rule of his own. "This is the law and the prophets." It is older than Jesus, and had authority before he uttered it. It is not found in the Old Testament in so many words, but he bears witness that it represents the spirit of the Old Testament in both law and prophecy. Modern readers can trace it further still. It is found, more or less clearly, in the ethical teachings of various peoples. Confucius has it, both in the negative form and in the positive.

The Buddha has it, and so have various other teachers. That is no objection to it as a Christian law, as some Christians have suspected that they ought to feel, but a strong commendation. The golden rule cannot be a specialty of any teacher or religion. It exists so widely because it is a law of universal right. It has been proved the right rule of conduct, and universal experience commends it. So far as men have learned to use good judgment in their life, "Do as you would be done by" is recognized the world over as the natural and reasonable rule of duty. It is almost an axiomatic law. Of course it is far from being universally practised, for passion is blind to it, and pride ignores it, and selfishness forgets it or denies it, and innumerable interests argue it impracticable. But it points out the ideal way to live, and the ideal of human society cannot be attained without it; and to this effect the sober judgment of the world bears witness.

A searching illustration of this law as a law of justice is given by Jesus in the parable of the unforgiving servant. From pure kindness a servant has been forgiven a vast debt that he owed his master; but when a fellow-servant begs him to forgive a trifling debt under identical conditions, he stubbornly refuses. The argument of the parable is that it was the duty of the servant to exercise the same pardon that he himself had pleaded for and received. The main appeal is not made to love or to compassion: it is represented that forgiveness was simply his duty, and that he sinned against justice in refusing

to forgive as he had been forgiven. He might claim that the debt was justly due to him; but the parable hints that justice had taken on a new form since he had been forgiven, and demanded of him forgiveness. The only allusion to mercy affirms mercy as a duty in his case: "Oughtest thou not to have had mercy upon thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee?" How utterly wrong, unjust, subversive of social right for the servant to refuse such a boon as had just been freely given to him! No human law can enforce this claim, though in the parable the master does proceed to enforce it, since he figures as the representative of God. But that makes no difference: a man is bound to do to others as he desires others to do to him. The parable is the more interesting because it illustrates the claim for something different from mere reciprocity. A third person comes in. The servant is not called upon to treat his master as his master has treated him, but to treat his fellow-servant so. The second man is told that it was his duty to do to the third as the first had done to him. By this the golden rule is laid down as a law to govern all social relations, for this is the teaching—"Treat every one as any one has treated you for your good." What a revelation is this! What a new thing it would make of life!

This illustration of the law of justice is all the more searching because it represents that law as penetrating to a region where love alone is often regarded as influential. What but love, we might ask, has anything to do with the forgiveness of injuries? Yet the

parable justifies itself. An unforgiving spirit grieves righteousness as deeply as it injures love. If pardon is the gift that we desire, pardon is the gift that justice requires us to impart.

Jesus makes another application of the law of justice, and of the principle of the golden rule, in what he says of the judgment that men should pass on one another. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." In this teaching there is nothing that is peculiar to Christianity: any moralist might have said the same, for the teaching is obvious. Yet none the less truly is it characteristic of Jesus and suited to stand among his instructions. That which it requires enters into his ideal of how men ought to live together. If it had stood in the Sermon on the Mount below the golden rule instead of above it, we should have said that he meant it for an illustration of that law, and should have called it a very good one. The point is simply that all such judgment should be avoided as one would be unwilling to have returned upon himself. "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged," by men around you; therefore be careful, and give only such as you would be willing to take.

If we ask what particular kind of judgment is thus ruled out, we find that he does not tell us, but leaves us to find out for ourselves. He has given us the text, but has not filled out the sermon. But the sermon is easily constructed. It is plain that on these terms we should have to avoid all rash and hasty judgment, made before we had good knowledge of

the facts; and all harsh, censorious, unloving judgment, needlessly condemnatory; and, no less, all foolish overappreciation, unreasoned and flattering. So much at least. The mind of Christ should lead us to fair judgment, grounded in the best reasons that lie within our reach and tempered by love. We are reminded that in such a world of give and take as this, injustice in judgment will be visited upon the unjust judge. Righteous judgment is always a duty, but the exhortation to it is based on this other ground besides, that one's manners have a right to come home to light upon one's self, and may be trusted to do it.

As to the use that Jesus would have us make of this rule of just judgment, it has sometimes been supposed that he was forbidding all judgment upon persons, and permitting it only upon acts and principles: men may judge the sin but not the sinner, the fault but not the man, all judgment upon persons being reserved to God. But this cannot be the meaning. Jesus himself in the same chapter passes judgment on the false prophets, and tells his hearers how to do the same. They are to "beware of false prophets," but how can they do this unless they judge them false? And the test is, "By their fruits ye shall know them." But we do not need his example to justify us in passing judgment on persons as well as on acts, for we cannot help doing it. We do pass moral judgment upon our fellow-beings for this sufficient reason. All the more reason is there, therefore, why our judgments should always be

just and reasonable. But we need not be ashamed of the practice of judging, if it is rightly governed. The omission of personal judgments would not be in accordance with the mind of Christ. It is often thought that it would: the mind of Christ is gentle, and we must condemn no man. It is true that the spirit of Christ is gentle, and that it would lead us to condemn no man if we could avoid it. But the spirit of Christ is righteous also, and, to speak of the simplest fact of all, it is honest. The ideal of Jesus does not include a state in which inevitable moral judgments are held in suppression, and honest convictions concerning good and evil are forbidden their right of way. He would have us judge, as we must, but always fairly and without contempt; and he would have our condemnations embraced in the redemptive love that never sees evil without desire to abolish it, or an evil man without desire to save him.

The close kinship of the golden rule to the second great commandment cannot fail to be noticed. That second law of love is indeed a law of justice, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," for here also it is just to equalize the claims. As we said about that law, so we may say of the golden rule, that Jesus performed an immense service to humanity by placing it where he did. The principle of the golden rule is a first principle in all sound ethics, and Jesus is the supreme teacher in religion. What he has done is this: he has taken this great first principle of ethics into religion, so to speak, and has

rendered it amenable to religious motive and appeal. Among his religious counsels he has given a central place to this prime ethical command. Similar was the act by which he placed the second great commandment side by side with the eternal and necessary first. In thus using the golden rule, he took an ethical principle that is sound without reference to religion, and set it where the motives of religion inspired from himself would reinforce and elevate it ever after. The service that he thus rendered to humanity has been appreciated in part, but is still to receive the recognition that is its due. When this universal law of social ethics comes to receive the full benefit that it will draw from the Christian inspiration, the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness will be at hand.

The golden rule is primarily a rule for self-judgment. This is evident upon the face of it, and we cannot fail to see that for this purpose it is a most valuable rule. Hard questions may arise as to our duty under it, but they arise from the conditions, not from the principle. The rule itself is perfectly intelligible, and in general each person is in a position to know how far he is loyal to it and how far disloyal. But to judge one's self under this rule requires a sound conscience, and a good intelligence too, and a fair knowledge of the life of other men. Education in the power of self-judgment under the golden rule is one thing that the world needs.

It proves impossible, however, to limit our judgment under the golden rule to self-judgment. By

the very nature of the life in common we are compelled to judge whether other men are faithful to it. The very existence of tolerable society depends upon some deference being paid to the golden rule, and the enriching of the quality of the social life depends upon the enlargement of loyalty to its principle. Thus any extensive violation of the golden rule becomes a sin against society; and any one who is watching the social life with a heart eager for its welfare cannot fail to take notice of such offences. In passing judgment upon other men's loyalty or disloyalty to the golden rule, it is very evident that we must be careful. We cannot always be sure that we understand the motives of other persons. We may have little doubt about them, and yet there is always a possibility that we may misjudge; and if we do, we may violate the golden rule in our very insistence upon it, passing such judgment as we would not wish to be returned upon ourselves. Nevertheless we cannot refrain from judging others under this rule, and we ought not. It is the will of God that we should judge. One of God's powerful agencies for righteousness in this world is the irrepressible judgment of men upon their fellows and their works. It is liable to error and abuse, and yet it is a genuine gift of God for the common good. The reformatory power of popular judgment is enormous. Especially in the conditions of the present time, when information is diffused so swiftly and so widely, is popular judgment becoming enlisted in the service of righteousness. By means of it God is pleased to

cleanse the world of much of its evil; and much of the evil which popular judgment may be helpful in putting away consists in sin against the golden rule. So the ideal of Jesus includes the free putting forth of mutual judgment in the interest of mutual purification.

In the present day the golden rule and the ideal of human value are combining to work conviction of vast social sin. The self-judgment that the golden rule calls for is not merely an individual matter. For certain purposes a group of men is a self. A firm is a self, and so is a corporation; so is a social class; so in fact is society itself. There are institutions and customs and practices for which perhaps a class of men is responsible, or perhaps a group of business interests, or perhaps a nation, or perhaps the total of men living together which we call society. Some such customs and institutions are utterly violative of the golden rule and ruinous to human value; and the group or body that is responsible for them ought to judge itself for its sin. In some degree this righteous self-condemnation is becoming a fact. The process has only begun, but it has begun. It will have to continue till great changes have been wrought. Any earnest voice of condemnation may help to awaken the voice of conscience where conscience needs to act. It is the Christian standing of this law of justice that renders the moral searchlight so terrible and so cleansing. When neglect of the golden rule wrecks human value, there is heard the voice of him who says, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it

not unto me"; and that appeal, reinforcing universal justice, will at length produce repentance, and works meet for repentance, in many a field of social wrong.

The law of justice is so unwelcome in great parts of the world's life that relief from its pressure is sought in discussion, and especially in claiming that the golden rule is impracticable. Sometimes the obscurity of the law is complained of, the difficulty of knowing exactly what one would wish to be done to himself if the case were turned about. That, however, would seem to be no reason why one might not try to find out. Oftener it is insisted that the thing cannot be done: the rule is a piece of mere idealism, with no possibility of ever becoming a law of real life: obedience to it would destroy the common and necessary operations of the world. But the law is too fundamental and self-commending to be thus escaped. This is a law whose judgment of condemnation or approval is absolutely inevitable, as soon as the moral grade of life becomes high and the voice of religion is clear. Of course the golden rule is not easily practicable. The passions of life and the complications of self-interest are against it. Common customs and institutions have grown up with little regard to it, and often expressly for protection to selfishness. Though there are large and invaluable traditions of justice among men, the inherited fashion of the world favors justice only in part. Moreover, the rule is so thoroughly a social one that one person alone can never do it justice. It calls for reciprocity, and can do its best work only when the social atmosphere sustains it. Doubtless, too, it is

not always easy to determine exactly what the law demands. Patience and wisdom must be brought to that question, together with all the impulses of the Christian heart, and a long growth of character must have come before the law can be most effective. The law is revolutionary, too. Long before perfection is in sight it will be plain that many an ancient institution is doomed, and that daily life must yield to a new principle. Shrinking from revolution, the world resists the law.

All this is true, and the golden rule cannot be fully established in force at once; and yet it is certain that it is the true law of life, whose claim is not to be evaded by any sophistications. Whether or not it is practicable to the full is a question for the future. At present it certainly is far more practicable than practised. It might be obeyed far more fully than it is. If we refuse it the obedience that is possible now on the ground that perfect obedience is not possible now, we sin against light and treacherously evade a plain duty. Jesus has shown us his ideal for the life that men live together, and we are living at a time when it is becoming plain as day that the principle of it would undo a thousand of our daily wrongs and ills. The world is suffering for this very thing, and the Christian ideal calls us on. From our Master and our brethren alike we receive the summons to put forth our best endeavors toward bringing this prime law of justice into full effect.

XII

WEALTH

I CANNOT trace the ideal of Jesus through its various applications in the common life of men, though only by seeing it in some of its applications can we really know it as it is. By no study of that ideal in the abstract can we see how broad and social it is, how general and yet how particular, how searching and yet how cheering. Some applications have already been apparent, but I wish to show one more. First and last he spoke a good deal about Wealth, and about the rich and the poor. That certainly is a perennial topic, and one that needs illumination from his peculiar light to-day as urgently as any; and so I am inclined to study here the sayings in which he showed how his ideal bore upon this matter. Not all students understand him alike on this subject, and probably I cannot interpret him to the satisfaction of all. But I am sure that there are no teachings of his that admit us more freely into the spirit of his kingdom than some of these, or show more clearly what kind of blessing he wished to send into the life of human society.

We must look for a moment at the background of the picture, which we find in certain current notions

about the rich and the poor, characteristic of the time and place.

Among the Jews, the poor were heirs at once to a strange and sad contempt, and to a peculiar hope. On the one hand, Israel had long had a national tradition of belief that the good were sure to prosper in this life, and the bad would have no prosperity. Men would get on in the world as they deserved. The thirty-seventh psalm, while it contains some beautiful expressions of pure religion, is the classical passage in the Old Testament to this effect. The belief that "they that are blessed of him shall inherit the land, and they that are cursed of him shall be cut off," and the confidence, "I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," had been a sincere attempt to solve the problem of trouble and of human inequality. This stands among the loyal but mistaken endeavors that men have made to justify the ways of God. This view of life had been partly laid aside before the days of Jesus, because it was found not to accord with the facts, but it had left its effect in the low estimation in which the poor were held. Those who could show no prosperity to attest the divine favor were more or less under a cloud, especially in the esteem of the prouder classes, to which the religious leaders mostly belonged. Generations of poor people had lived under the shadow of the thought that they were poor because they did not deserve to be rich. Yet, on the other hand, in strange contrast to this, Israel had from other scriptures another national tradition. It was written that the poor were the special care of

Jehovah, who was the God of the friendless and unfortunate. Often in the Psalms he is invoked as their helper, and responds with strong promises for their encouragement. Hs is the God of the fatherless and the widow. In spite of the doctrine that blessed the prosperous in his name, there was a deep-lying impression that God is on the side of the weaker party, so that "he that hath no helper" has in him a friend who will not fail. Thus a peculiar mixture of contempt and favor was the portion of the poor in the time of Jesus. It was in the common thought that God must be against them, and yet in another light he seemed to be their special friend.

In the same conditions, the rich were heirs in a special degree to a false conceit of their own virtue. Centuries of national decay had not wholly effaced the vain pride fostered by the doctrine that prosperity proves the divine favor. Of course the temptation to conceit and superciliousness followed. Their wealth was precious as all wealth is, but it was gifted with a more dangerously suggestive quality as a witness to the approval of God. Of such a doctrine self-righteousness is the sure fruit. Though this theory of wealth had faded in part, its influence remained, in a pious enhancement of the respect that was paid to the rich, and in their sense of deserving it.

Jesus moved in such a world as this, and we have to observe how he acted and spoke in it.

As to his personal position, he was neither rich nor poor, but was more nearly poor than rich. The

statement of his poverty is often exaggerated. He and his associates were not in the poorest class or anywhere near it. His position was lowly, but there is no sign that it was one of want. He is called the carpenter's son, and the carpenter, and the common impression that he worked as a carpenter, is probably correct. He was of the working class, but labor was honored, not despised, and industry brought a living. His disciples were mainly of the same class with himself, but some were better off. His saying, "The Son of man hath not where to lay his head," does not mean that he was homeless all his days. When he uttered these words he was a teacher who could promise no fixed abode to his followers, having none himself. "If you follow me now, you must expect to be a wanderer." Apparently Jesus moved among both classes, rich and poor, with equal freedom. He visited the homes of rich men by invitation. At various times he was the guest of the prosperous, and apparently welcome. At the same time the story of his ministry is a consistent story of friendliness to the poor.

When we come to his teaching, we find that he did not address men primarily as rich or poor. Rightly, too, for he was concerned with them all, and spoke to them as men, handling themes that touched them all alike. His large and simple view of life was suited to the case of all men, and he could appeal to them wherever he found them. His concern with them as rich or poor was only a concern as to how well they were fulfilling their destiny by doing their

duty to God and men. But this was the vital question, and he was entirely free in speaking to them as rich or poor if he could help them here. To the rich as rich he seems to have spoken most, and he spoke in all faithfulness. He pointed out their responsibilities and dangers, and he never showed the slightest deference to their wealth, or to them as holding it. To the poor he spoke according to their condition, bringing them a tender heart and a message of divine kindness. He found the hearts of the needy. Concerning himself he quoted from prophecy, "He hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor," and described his ministry by saying, among other things, that "the poor have good tidings preached to them." Perhaps the word poor was broader in his meaning than it is in our common speech; but what he meant was that he was bringing the good news of sympathetic and helpful love to the unfortunate whom men despised, and was thus fulfilling the ancient hope of the poor that God would be their helper. So the poor heard his voice with a tender and pathetic gladness, and out of the shadow of an undeserved contempt many came into the light of the kingdom of heaven.

Taking his conduct as a whole, we cannot see that Jesus either commended or condemned riches or poverty as necessarily involving a moral quality. Neither class did he either court or shun. He spoke severely and warningly to one class and comfortably to the other, but he did not avoid the class that he warned, or praise the class that he comforted. Both

were deemed worthy of his company and of his faithful counsels.

The utterances concerning wealth, and concerning the rich and the poor, are found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. At first sight it is surprising to find that between Matthew and Luke there is a remarkable difference of tone on the subject. The Gospel of Luke is sometimes called the Gospel of the poor. It contains the largest number of allusions to them, and records the strongest words of good cheer for their encouragement. It also contains warnings of the rich as a class, which in Matthew do not appear. Here alone stand the parables of warning to rich men—the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Rich Fool, the Dishonest Steward. Some sayings that in Matthew bear another meaning appear in Luke with keen edge against the rich. Matthew's beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," becomes in Luke, "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven." Not only so, but it is matched by a woe, either of condemnation or of pity, upon the opposite class: "But woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." In like manner the "hunger and thirst after righteousness" of Matthew appears in Luke as "hunger"—"Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled"; and this again is matched by "Woe unto you that are full now, for ye shall hunger." Thus we find differing testimonies attributed to Jesus. We find a strong utterance against

the rich in one Gospel, which the compiler of another Gospel had no idea of putting in.

It is interesting to find the same divergent testimonies in the writings of men who had learned of Jesus. These two views of rich and poor appear in the early church and run through the New Testament. In fellowship with the Gospel of Luke stands most decidedly the Epistle of James, and the same tone sounds in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. In these writings the poor man appears to have the advantage as a Christian, while the rich man is more or less at a disadvantage because he is rich. But the Gospel of Mark is of like effect with Matthew on the point, and the latter part of the Acts of the Apostles is in the same company, while the Epistles of Paul have no animus against the rich. In this difference of feeling there is nothing to wonder at, since there are reasons for it in human nature and in the common relations of life; but it has often been perplexing to find both feelings attributed to Jesus himself. Whatever the opinions of his followers may have been, we should be glad to know just what he said, and which sentiment truly represents him. Was he as severe upon the rich as he appears in Luke, or has that meaning been interpreted into his words by the feeling of his followers? It would be a satisfaction to know which form of the beatitude of the poor is really characteristic of Jesus.

Efforts have been made to decide which form of the beatitude was the original, but without very satisfactory success. Reasons are given for both con-

lusions, but students have after all decided largely in pursuance of their temperament or associations. For my own part, I have not been able to see how without a certain amount of partisanship I could reach an opinion as to whether the original beatitude was "Blessed are the poor in spirit," or "Blessed are ye poor." So I am compelled to leave that historical question unanswered.

But really I do not suffer seriously from this inability. If it were not for a single point, there would be no trouble at all. The only difficulty is that the two forms of the beatitude appear to be intended as reports of one and the same utterance. The two Gospels seem to be quoting the same thing, but differ. But this need not surprise us or perplex us. It is not as if we were handling documents that promised perfect accuracy. This is not the only discrepancy of the kind that we have to deal with. We are often meeting just such differences in the Gospels, and by this time they ought not to trouble us. If the two passages represent the same saying, as apparently they do, one of the reports must have been altered by reporter or compiler, or somewhere between, and conformed to some one's understanding of the Master.

And if we still feel that we must know which was the original saying, it must be said that so far as our conception of Jesus and his ideal is concerned it does not make so very much difference. Both sayings may have fallen from his lips. Certainly the Master may have said, "Blessed are the poor in

spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"; and certainly in some moods and connections the same Master may have spoken comfortably to the literal poor and said, "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God"; certainly, too, he may have warned the rich that they may be having all their comforts now, that their fulness is but temporary, and their woe is coming if they continue in the rich man's pride. He who said, "How hardly shall a rich man enter the kingdom," may have said also, "But woe to you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." In either instance the denunciation does not go out so much against the fact of wealth as against the temper of mind that wealth encourages. Either of the two sayings corresponds to the ideal of Jesus. They do not contradict each other in any vital way, and he may perfectly well have uttered them both. So I do not feel the need of great labor to ascertain which was the original beatitude. I should be glad to know, but for the interpretation of Jesus and his view of life it is not absolutely necessary. Both represent the mind of the Master, each in its own connection.

It was in his parables that Jesus spoke most largely, and most plainly, about rich and poor and the use of wealth. As to the parables of Jesus, it has always been noticed that he makes much use of analogies from nature to illustrate the life of man in relation to God, and grateful recognition has always been made of his testimony to the spiritual suggest-

iveness of the natural world. This view of his words has not received too much attention, but sufficient notice has not been taken of the fact that he has drawn more illustrations from human affairs than he has from nature. Many of his parables are simply human narratives, and some are stories of business and industry. Some of them are as secular as any stories can be, and some have the use of money for their turning-point. And we have no reason to assume that he used these worldly narratives solely for illustration of spiritual and heavenly things. Money, for example, he does not regard only as a symbol of eternal values. The better we know him, the more certain we are that he means to teach earthly lessons also.

Two habits of mind in Christian readers have favored this misunderstanding. First the long habit of reading everything in the Bible as technically religious has made it seem almost incredible that Jesus talked about the commonest matters of this world's ethics. All must relate to what is known as the religious life. Thus preoccupied, readers have failed to see how much of this world's ordinary life is touched in the words that lie before them. And a similar blinding to facts has resulted from the long habit of reading the Bible as a book of individualism and not of society. The individual career and the personal salvation have so filled the field of view that readers have not lifted up their eyes to the social horizon, or perceived how Jesus was working out an ideal of salvation not only for the individual, but

for the world. When Christian readers can shake themselves free from these preoccupations they will better understand their Master.

One of the secular illustrations, thoroughly secular, is found in the parable of the Talents, of which that of the Pounds is apparently a variant. This is a story of the use of money, which might come straight out of actual life. Certain slaves are intrusted by their master with money in various amounts, which they are to use in trade, according to their own judgment and ability, to make gain for him. Perhaps in such a case they might receive a commission, but that does not appear in the parable. Of course the qualities essential to success are good judgment, diligence, and fidelity. The size of the trust—ten talents, five, or one—is prominent in appearance, but does not enter at all into the question of the master's approval at the end. What is approved and rewarded is good, wise, practical use of the money. What is condemned is the irresponsible spirit that shirks the task and finds excuses for it, the laziness that ignores the trust and gets nothing to show for it at last. Faithfulness and good management meet their reward, while punishment falls upon the indolent man who exerts himself only in finding reasons for neglect of his duty.

Undoubtedly this is intended to illustrate the trusts that are committed to men in connection with the work of God's kingdom. But see how this financial illustration represents them. If it pictures

them fairly, they must be practical trusts that cannot be fulfilled in thought or aspiration, but require work of the liveliest order; and they must be social trusts, to be wrought out not in solitude, but by wise and strenuous endeavor among men. They require far-sight, alertness, skill, and patience, just as the use of money does. Thus the parable pictures the kingdom as a busy place, where men work with a will as they do in making money. The King's business is business. And at the same time the illustration is in turn illustrated by the use that is made of it. The kind of business life that Jesus would think well of is seen in the picture that he uses to teach a lesson. He has pointed out with approval the kind of qualities essential to the management of a financial enterprise. He has illustrated his point by showing wealth held as a trust for profitable use, for which its holder will be called to give account; and he conveys the impression that such a trust ought to be administered by far-seeing, painstaking, well-managed effort for the worthy fulfilment of the end in view. He has not said in so many words that wealth is a trust from God, but his manner of using the financial illustration implies this lesson. Wealth is a trust for which account must be given; the use that is made of it is a test of those who have it; the opportunity that it opens must be met in the spirit that the parable commends; to evade the giver's will and purpose is failure in the work of life; and Jesus' ideal of faithfulness, wisdom, and steadfast purpose shines out in full brightness. He

would see men of wealth using it with all their vigor for the Giver's ends.

In another parable his estimate of wealth and his idea of the way to use it are brought out by contrast. It is the parable of the Foolish Rich Man. The discourse starts from a question of property, a hearer having asked Jesus to bid his brother divide the inheritance with him. Of the merits of the case we know nothing, for Jesus ignores the request, on the ground that such work does not belong to his office; he is no judge or divider. But he seizes the opportunity for a word of counsel. Beware, he says, of all covetousness. What a man has is not the main point; not in the abundance of his possessions does his life consist. Life devoted to possessions ends in failure, and wealth that is turned to no gracious outlet soon proves its own worthlessness. See the rich man with harvests too great for his storage. He has enough for many years, and is satisfied and comfortable, desiring nothing more. He thinks only of himself, and counts only upon enjoying what he has. Nothing is charged against him but this. There is no hint of fraud or oppression in the getting of his wealth. The earth has given him its harvests, and he is simply the self-contented man, calling upon himself to take his ease and his pleasure in his abundance. His wealth has made him self-satisfied and self-indulgent—that is all. But life ends. God says to him, "Thou fool, this night is thy soul required of thee," and instantly all that he has drops

from worth to worthlessness. It is his no longer. Whose shall it be? any one's but his. At that summons, sure to come, wealth loses all its value. The trouble is, says Jesus, that the man has been laying up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. His seeking has been self-seeking, and he has turned everything to self-indulgence. Jesus' way is for a man to be rich toward God, heir to a spiritual value in God's sight; and this he may do whether he is rich in this world or not. If he has the wealth of this world and it does not help to make him rich toward God through the use that he makes of it, then he too is a foolish man, like the man in the parable, and has gained nothing from all that he possesses. If this man is regarded as holding his wealth as a trust from God, then he certainly has "digged in the earth and hid his Lord's money," and has nothing to show for it. The selfish, thoughtless rich of all ages, who know no use of their wealth beyond their own enjoyment, and fancy that this is enough, here have the withering light of Jesus' ideal turned upon them. Their alienation from that ideal is complete, and their failure is as sure as death.

Another parable carries the lesson one step further, from self-indulgence to that selfish indifference to others which is its natural companion. It is the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus; but if titles were to be made appropriate it would be called the parable of the rich man and the beggar.

This parable has one scene laid in the future life, and Christian readers have been so fascinated by this glimpse of the unseen world that they have done scant justice to the chief meaning. This is not a parable of the future life, but of the present. The reference to the future life is only incidental to the purpose of the story, and we have no reason to suppose that Jesus intended to draw plain pictures of heaven and hell. He is talking about human relations that exist here and now and are bound to bear kindred fruit hereafter. The parable is one of the plainest and sharpest utterances ever made concerning man's inhumanity to man, encouraged by the luxurious life of the wealthy. Through the sharpest of contrasts his ideal of human fellowship and helpfulness comes out.

There is a rich man who lives self-indulgently and splendidly. Unnoticed at his door lies a beggar, longing for so much as even the crumbs from the rich man's table. This rich man is not accused of dishonesty, or oppression, or avarice. His fault indeed is not described in words: it is only exhibited. He lives alone in his glory, and is indifferent to another's need, and even unaware of it, though it lies plainly in his sight. Selfishness and luxury have rendered him contentedly isolated from humanity. This is all; the rich man does not harm the beggar: he is simply unaware of him.

But the scene changes. The beggar dies and goes, in the care of angels, where all good Hebrews hope to go. The rich man dies also, and to his sur-

prise finds himself in torments. He sees where the beggar is, and cries out, begging himself, entreating for even a drop of water, a moment's relief, to be brought him by the man whom at his own table he overlooked. But in vain. He is reminded that the two have changed places. In his lifetime he had what he wanted while the beggar wished in vain, but now the case is reversed. Each is reaping his harvest in kind. Moreover, they cannot change places now or do anything for each other. The mission of the water-carrier is impossible; the sufferer must bear it—he cannot be helped out. And now, in this lurid light of consequences, the story comes back to this world, to end where it began, in human life. The sufferer in the flame thinks of his five brothers, still alive amid the old temptations of wealth and luxury, and entreats that they may be warned by the beggar sent back to earth, to avoid the life that will bring them where he now is. But in vain again. He is told that there is no need of their coming to that place of torment, since they have God's own teaching in Moses and the prophets. A messenger from the dead would bring them no new light or power, for their own Scriptures tell them what kind of life will keep them out of hell.

It cannot be said that Jesus represents one man as in torments because he was rich and the other in Abraham's bosom because he was poor. Why the rich man is in torments we infer from the beginning of the story, where he appears in selfish isolation, prevented by his love of luxury from knowing that

another is in need. Why the poor man is in Abraham's bosom we are not told: we are only shown that he is comforted there, whence we infer that he is worthy of the comfort and belongs where comfort is to be found. The lesson that the parable does drive home with power is that wealth brings to its possessor a terrible opportunity and temptation to be separate in interest from his kind. If it absorbs him in luxury and enjoyment, it isolates him. At his princely table a man is apt to forget that there are beggars, even though one is lying at his door. If he knows that the beggars exist, still his luxury may easily blind him to their necessities. Not that a man needs to be rich to be thus alienated from the human fraternity; but for the rich the temptation is tremendous. The parable bears home the lesson, too, that such selfish alienation from one's kind works hopeless misery. God's world is not a world in which such life can prosper. And it is a present-day lesson, uttered in a world where all who hear it have light enough to show them the way of human sympathy and help. Thus does Jesus cast the revealing light of his ideal upon the sin of indifference to man, which wealth does so much to foster. In the kingdom that he desires to bring, no man is selfishly alienated from his brother.

Another sharp lesson on the use of money meets us in the parable of the Dishonest Steward. To this parable many meanings have been attributed, and yet it is intelligible enough when it is taken as a

simple story from real life, addressed to a real audience to whom the conditions were familiar. It is plain at a glance that it was intended for reproof and warning to certain rich men, but to what class of rich men? This Jesus himself decides for us, by calling their possessions "the mammon of unrighteousness." This can only mean "unrighteous mammon," or wealth dishonestly obtained. Even without this phrase to guide us the meaning ought to be plain; for, as all readers know, it is a dishonest trick with money that the parable recounts and traces to its end. So it is plain that Jesus was warning men who had become rich unrighteously. It appears too, as the story proceeds, that the men entertained some idea of using their ill-gotten wealth in the interest of their own future welfare. Probably they thought of doing good with it, or of devoting it to some sacred service, in the hope that in the kingdom of God, soon to be established, it would win them a welcome. Somehow, at any rate, they had the idea of "making friends" by means of it, to serve their own advantage in the future. The parable itself provides this background for our understanding of it.

The story is that a rich proprietor has let his land on shares to tenants, and at the end of the season they are to turn over to him his proportion of the crops. They pay in kind. His steward, or manager, who collects the rents, has been found guilty of some wasteful mismanagement, and is told to make up his accounts preparatory to vacating his office. He reflects that he is too frail for hard work and too proud

to beg, and decides that he must do something to take care of himself when his office is gone. He thinks out a plan that suits him. Before making up his accounts he goes around and asks each tenant how much he is owing the proprietor as his share of the year's crop. On getting the answer, by the authority that he still holds as manager, he tells each one to report a smaller debt. This means, of course, that he is using the proprietor's authority to make every tenant a present at the proprietor's expense. He is well assured that none of them will report him for this, for they will all profit by the trick; and he calculates that in their gratitude for this relief they will take him into their houses for a while and look out for him until he can turn himself to some other occupation. The proprietor finds out what he has done, as of course he must, and cannot help praising him for a shrewd rogue who has played a sharp trick. Jesus thinks it a shrewd trick too; for, as he says, that kind of people, children of this world, are shrewder in their sphere of life than the children of light are in theirs. The palm for smartness goes to the wicked.

After the story the application. "And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." But of course this is ironical. When Jesus tells the holders of dishonest money to do what the villain in the story did, in hope of gaining what he had sought, there is no other way to understand him; he

must be ironical. "Go, you holders of wealth that you have gotten by fraud, go, and do likewise. You are looking to the time when you will be wanting a welcome in eternal dwelling-places. Very well, follow out your plan: trust your corrupt money to make you friends against that time. Use your dishonest gains with the idea of buying your welcome in the kingdom of God—and perhaps you will find the welcome waiting for you when you need it!"

The parable does not tell us all that we would like to know about riches basely gained. It does not tell what positive use ought to be made of such possessions, or answer the question whether "tainted money" is capable or incapable of doing good in the world. But that tainted money is bad money for its owner, and that he must not expect to win into the kingdom of heaven by using it for that purpose, it does make very plain. The plan does not succeed, even in the story; how much less, then, with God! How unlovely, too, does such a plan appear when it is portrayed as an actual thing in real life! Call things by their right names; call fraud fraud. Call men by their right names too, and let them learn to call themselves by their right names, and see themselves as they are.

It may seem very little to say that the ideal of Jesus here appears in clearness and power against dishonesty in the gaining of wealth, and against all hypocritical tricks to make base winnings serve the final good of the winner. But it is not so little, after all. These are perfectly proper things for the

high-minded Jesus to denounce. The implied warnings, too, are all worthy of him. In all gaining of money there is dreadful opportunity of falling into some dishonest method through keen self-interest. If the men who know this temptation by experience could be counted up, they would be numerous enough to vindicate the Master a thousand times for uttering this parable. And when wrong has been done, there is often temptation somehow to carry it off by high professions, and cover it up under later good intentions, and hope that after all it may do no final harm or may even be turned to good. The parable serves a world-wide and age-long purpose as a vigorous expression of the high standard of cleanness and honor that Jesus would have all men hold respecting money.

All the synoptics tell how little children were brought to Jesus for his blessing, and how he said that the kingdom of God must be received in the spirit of a little child; and immediately after this they all tell of the rich young man who ran eagerly to question Jesus but turned sadly away. We have met him before in this study, but he comes to us here again, and through him the Master gives us a lesson on our present topic. He has kept the commandments, but is not satisfied; something has stirred a deeper longing, and whatever more must be done to obtain eternal life he feels himself ready to do. He touches the Master's heart by his sincerity and his high possibilities, but he cannot be received as he is. Even the external conditions are against it. The ideal of

life for the little group about Jesus will not admit him. If he "follows" with his wealth still in his hands, he will seem both to himself and to the others to be unlike the rest, and if he spends freely for the support of the company, the characteristic type of its life will be gone, while if he does not the rest will complain of him as miserly. In that group there is no place for a rich man, for he cannot really take the place of a disciple just like all the rest, following Jesus only. So when he asks, "What lack I yet?" it is nothing strange that Jesus answers, "Sell everything, give the money to the poor, and then come and be my follower." But the test shows that the external difficulty is not the greatest. It reveals the man himself as incapable of the necessary act. He has great wealth, which he loves and cannot bring himself to part with. "His countenance fell at that saying, and he went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions."

In his comment Jesus has nothing to say about the external conditions, but goes straight to the moral difficulty within. "With what difficulty shall a rich man enter the kingdom of God!" It is impossible. This young man most vividly illustrates the impossibility. It ought to be needless to say that by the kingdom of God here is not meant a future heaven: it means the life that here and now responds to the dominion of God's will. He could not enter, because his riches were too nearly a part of him; he took his temper from them; they determined what kind of life he must live; he was not ready to detach

himself from them and become a simple disciple to Jesus and an equal brother to poor men. The kingdom was of one temper and he of another. As this rich man could not enter, so it naturally would be with any rich man; the spirit of devotion to wealth was incompatible with the lowly and unselfish spirit of the kingdom. This was news to the disciples, who had never met the question before, and it is no wonder that they asked in amazement, "Who, then, can be saved?" But though Jesus admitted that to God even this great change was possible, he asserted still that so far as human considerations go it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. The two tempers are irreconcilable.

If we accept a very probable textual reading, we have in the second Gospel a still more searching statement of this great difficulty. After he has said, "How hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God!" and the disciples have expressed their amazement, Jesus adds with sad emphasis, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!" The difficulty is not all due to riches: it is the great human difficulty, exhibited by the rich in its extreme form, but common to man. The kingdom is hard to enter. The temper of pride—self-sufficiency and unbrotherly isolation—is a human temper, race-wide, and it is a bar that must be removed before the kingdom can be entered. The trouble with wealth is that it gives the greatest opportunity to this anti-Christian spirit. So the young man as an object-lesson concerning wealth gives warning to all mankind. The

meaning is not that money is necessarily an enemy to God and cannot be used for him. It is that the money ideal and the ideal of God are incompatible, and it is only by being cured of his devotion to the one that a man can become loyal to the other.

There is a single word that expresses much of Jesus' judgment concerning wealth. In the interpretation of the parable of the Sower, among the forces that correspond to thorn-roots in the soil choking the growth of the good seed, is counted "the deceitfulness of riches." Here is a quality that goes far to justify the various warnings. Among the dangers of wealth is its power to blind men to its dangers and mislead them by its promises. Wealth is the greatest of self-commenders, and it often lures men on by painting a future which it cannot create. It seems good to have, and in many respects, of course, it is good to have. But it promises usefulness that it does not bring forth. It encourages gracious motives to remain in its company, and promises them large exercise, but represses them when it has got the power. It proposes to a man that he shall be its master, but it becomes his master, and holds tyrannical power over him by becoming a necessity to him and imposing upon him a thousand new necessities. It persuades a man to justify the self-indulgence into which it leads him and the selfish isolation from humanity which it promotes. It encourages its owner in manifold self-deception as to his own heart. It does not do all

this for every one who holds it, but this deceitfulness belongs to it, and the opportunity stands wide open. Moreover, to the deceitfulness of wealth it is not necessary that one should possess it. It deceives the poor as well as the rich. By an attractiveness that conceals the moral dangers it often corrupts those who do not possess it. It makes them in love with false and injurious standards of life. It convinces a seeker for it that he is specially exempt from the perils of the seeking. It stands as an end, and claims to justify many an unworthy and sinful means. All this, of course, Jesus did not specify, but long experience has shown that he did well to speak warningly of "the deceitfulness of riches." Devotion to wealth, as an object in life, stands in contrast to his ideal of clear straightforwardness in seeking a high end.

On the other hand, it is to be noticed that Jesus never utters any warning against the perils of poverty. No Gospel represents him as dwelling on the spiritual dangers of the poor. While the rich are barred from the kingdom in so far as they are governed by self-satisfaction and unbrotherly isolation from men, he conceives of the poor as prepared in some degree for the kingdom by their comparative simplicity of heart and freedom from false self-estimate. Yet there are grave moral dangers for the poor, as he must have known. Poverty not only works injury through limitation and the loss of valuable opportunities, but it brings its temptations to envy and bitterness of spirit, and to unworthy efforts to better one's condition. But Jesus seems to

have considered the harm wrought by poverty less grounded in the will than that which is wrought by wealth, and the poor, consequently, less in need of warning than the rich.

Twice—though one of the cases was as far as possible from that of wealth—Jesus saw persons using their possessions in ways that he could warmly commend. There was a poor widow who cast into the temple treasury her contribution for the divine service. It was the least of the offerings that were made, and the gifts of the rich buried it in the box; but he declared it to be the greatest gift of them all. It was the greatest in proportion to what the giver had, and it represented the largest and freest impulse to give. In the most of the offerings there was no self-sacrifice at all, but this one had self-sacrifice for its very life. So the spirit that inspired it was identical with the spirit of the kingdom of God. Here was not only giving, but self-giving. The clear eye of Jesus saw beauty where ordinary eyes saw an ordinary gift of trifling consequence, and he bore testimony to the value of such generosity. When money was given for a good use he would see it given freely, in a spirit that did not closely count the cost. Gifts out of superfluity had no beauty in comparison with gifts out of necessity, bestowed because the heart would offer them.

In very different conditions a similar lesson came out again. At Bethany, just before the end of his life, a woman brought a flask of ointment intended

for the toilet, very costly, broke it, and poured the ointment upon his head. His disciples, utilitarian to the core, thought this sinfully extravagant, since the ointment might have brought enough to give large help to the poor. But Jesus felt the real meaning of the act. What had happened was not merely the outpouring of ointment; it was an outpouring of the heart. The act was a giving of value for love's sake, going beyond the range of ordinary reasons. There was a fine impulsiveness about it that Jesus recognized with joy, a beautiful generosity that counted nothing too fine to be used for the heart's satisfaction. The outburst of a freely giving spirit delighted him. He had a welcome too for the insight that would discern an opportunity of love, and the zeal that would seize it. This was the only moment. Kindness to the poor was a part of the ordinary life, to be counted upon as a matter of course in the common round; but his own presence with those who loved him was temporary, and now was near its end. Here was a loving heart that dimly foresaw the end, and could not hold back its costly tribute. Others might condemn, Jesus would congratulate. If we follow his leading here we shall see that his ideal has room for a glad impulsiveness in the gracious use of one's possessions, as well as for a well-directed judgment. Freeness has beauty in his sight. This is no new lesson indeed, for the good Samaritan is represented as rushing to his helpful work, with good judgment and yet with a generous zest. If a man has something that he can

use beyond himself, Jesus would see him not its slave, but its master, not narrowed by it into a calculator of how little he may do, but pouring it out generously at his own strong impulse. Apparently he would be quite willing that a free heart should sometimes be run away with by its eagerness to bless. Better too much than too little.

To sum up in a statement or two what Jesus has said about wealth is no easy matter. Many have thought that he condemned the holding of property altogether; but it does not seem likely that in the long run this will be understood to have been his intention. Probably property-holding in itself will stand the test of his judgment. But of course it must be added that when his ideal comes to have due influence property-holding will be a very different thing from what it is now. His influence would bring it under the control of righteousness and brotherhood, required both by sound ethics and by the Christian mind. It seems more like Christ that the ideal of righteousness and brotherhood should be attained through learning the right use of wealth than through the abolition of it.

We may ask whether Jesus must be understood to condemn vast fortunes and the owners of them. No, not directly. He condemns no man for what he is not guilty of, and certainly not every possessor of a vast fortune is to be blamed for having it. Even if it be true that in the accumulation of every vast fortune there has been something wrong, still it

is not all the fault of the one man who holds the fortune. It may be partly his fault, but it may be partly the fault of other men, and it is largely the fault of what we call the system, the prevailing order of life, which is chargeable to the mingled good and evil of human nature. But we must not doubt for a moment that the spirit of Jesus disapproves an order of life in which the accumulation of vast fortunes is provided for, and stands as a natural and normal thing. His ideal would not tolerate conditions that work out by their own nature into so unequal a distribution of property. A thoroughly Christian world would be unlike the present order on both sides; there would be none so poor and none so rich as there are now. Christ inspiring a social order would maintain a better equality, and would do it not through some artificial and formal reconstruction, but through the steady and effective working of the Christian motives.

But the moral effect of Jesus' teaching about wealth is plain enough. He does not assert that wealth is by everlasting necessity inconsistent with his ideal, but he does represent that wealth is fitted by its nature to be an active foe of his ideal, and bids men beware of allowing it to do its hostile work. He declares that the ordinary spirit of a rich man, devoted to his wealth and governed by it, is incompatible with the spirit that the kingdom of God requires. He throws strong light upon the manner in which wealth may render a man selfish, self-indulgent, self-satisfied, and indifferent to his fellows.

In the golden rule he sets up a standard of life of which wealth easily tends to make men oblivious; and in his insistence upon human value he enters another field in which wealth, ignoring the worth of men, is apt to be a power of wrong. He points out the deceitfulness by which wealth blinds men to its dangers. In his teaching as a whole, wealth appears as a powerful solicitor to the lowering of the high aim and the abandonment of the ideal of the kingdom.

The judgment that declares a rich man unable to enter the kingdom is not final, however, because to God all things are possible. Divine grace, which can work wonders, can overcome this human impossibility and impart a spirit that will master the temptation and hold wealth in the spirit of the kingdom. It becomes all who are tempted by money in any way to seek the dominion of this new spirit, for certainly Jesus exhibits the fact of wealth in the world as a manifold menace to his ideal and peril to the souls of men. He makes us feel that it is easier for a man's character to be ruined by wealth than by poverty, and easier for wealth to ruin its possessor than to make him a blessing. He has not spoken of wealthy Christians, but we come away from his teaching with the impression that if a man is to prosper as a Christian while he is rich he must needs have a double portion of the spirit of God. Wealth can be used for the kingdom, and in the spirit of the kingdom, and is a necessary instrument for some parts of the kingdom's work; but

there are mighty powers enlisted against its best usefulness, and only through fulness of Christian grace can its good work be done. The hope is that the redemptive power of God will win the victory over the hostile force and convert wealth into a friend.

The spirit of Jesus certainly has nothing but condemnation for that great wave of money-love which has swept over Christendom in our time, affecting all classes of the people. It has fostered self-indulgence, brightened the charm of luxury, added to the zest of fashion, reinforced the impulse to gambling, stimulated depraved appetites, corrupted business and politics, brought in new varieties of crime, oppressed the poor, deepened the bondage of excessive labor, increased the alienation of social classes, materialized the popular ideals, weakened religious influences, and made heavenly things seem far away. From this craze of the love of money the voice of Jesus calls the people back to the sane life in ethics and religion in which he is leader.

XIII

CHRISTIANITY

The ideal of Jesus sounds out in his words and deeds, and we have listened to him long enough to understand of what sort it is. I have not been anxious to gather in every utterance that might help to complete the story, for that seemed neither possible nor necessary. But I have tried so to interpret his testimony as to present in the large a true impression of what he was minded to offer to the world. Incomplete though the work has been, I feel that enough has passed before us to show what manner of ideal for human life and destiny Jesus had at heart. Imperfectly, but really, we can see what conception of the highest good he left in the world, to be wrought out in experience. I have not gathered it up into a summary statement, because I was waiting to use it at this point for a practical purpose.

Now, after nineteen centuries, the Christian people are inquiring once again, more eagerly than ever, what Christianity really is. I propose that in the light of the study that we have made we ask Jesus himself to interpret Christianity for us. He certainly is the one to ask. We will gather up his ideal

as well as we can into unity of expression, and inquire in the light of it what his permanent gift to the world appears to be. Christianity exists among us and within us, a great complex fact, which has come down to us through ages from him, and we desire to understand it better in order that we may do it better justice. Our own life is waiting, and the world is waiting, for us to find out just what it is. Ask the Master himself. Look at his own ideal and judge from that what Christianity must be.

The search is often prosecuted in another way, not so good as this. It is a common practice to study Christianity as we observe it, and try to gather the sum of it into a single definition. The defining of Christianity is an enterprise upon which many have labored. I have tried the experiment more than once, in the hope that in some single statement I might be able to set forth the essence of Christianity—a favorite name for that which we are seeking. But I have always found two difficulties that I could not overcome. One was that in any compact expression that I might frame very much had to be implied which I had no room to express, but which needed to be expressed if I was to make a good definition. I could not get it all in. My brief clauses rested on unseen foundations, which, however, were too essential to the purpose to be left unseen. This is a difficulty that all defining is liable to encounter, but in the present case it assumed such proportions as to defeat the entire attempt. It means that from

the interior nature of the case a satisfactory single definition is impossible: Christianity contains too much to be gathered up in a definition. If I confine myself to its peculiarities or special points, I omit the underlying principles, without which they are not properly accounted for; but if I fill my statement with the underlying principles, I cannot set the peculiarities of Christianity in the right perspective. If I try to include the whole, my statement becomes too large and cumbrous to serve the purpose of a definition.

I encountered a similar difficulty in defining Christianity when it was viewed in a more external light. It is a jewel of many facets. It appeals to various minds in various ways, and in differing conditions it takes forms that cannot all be justly represented by a single statement. If I framed a definition and tried to test it by comparing it with facts, I kept finding expressions or aspects of Christianity to which it did not well apply, or for which it did not make sufficient provision. There were sure to be Christians who would not recognize what I set before them. I felt certain that I must have thought out only a provincial definition; another man might make another equally good and equally defective. In its actual development Christianity is too large and various a thing to be sufficiently characterized by any single statement. Even if I discern its central characteristic aright, that by itself is not sufficient to form a definition.

So, after many experiments, I finally gave over the

attempt. I must report, too, that what I discovered in my own experience has been confirmed by my observation of other men's work. Many beautiful and enlightening expressions have been reached in the effort to define Christianity, and some of them are very dear to me, but as definitions they are disappointing. Either they leave implied much that needs to be expressed if a definition is to serve its purpose, or they present some one aspect of Christianity and do injustice to others equally important. The result of it all has been that I have ceased to expect justice to be done to Christianity by a definition. It is wise and profitable to multiply descriptive statements, and to make them as correct and rich and comprehensive as possible, for these may finely commend it, calling attention to its manifold truth and beauty; but it is hopeless to attempt to gather the whole great meaning into a sentence or a group of phrases.

I am glad, therefore, to be engaged in a study that suggests another method. We have been listening to Jesus; now we will ask him what Christianity is. We will project the lines from his ideal and see what they enclose. We will question his large view of life as to what the religion is that came forth from him. He never talked of any religion at all, as we name it, coming forth from him, but one did come forth, and in his large utterance of the best that he knew and the best that he desired he has given us means of judging what it is. If we are deeply in doubt as to its nature, it is because we have not sufficiently

consulted the Master — or if we have consulted him, we have not heard him through when he answered us.

The present question, therefore, is, What, judging from what we have learned to be the ideal of Jesus, shall we say that Christianity is?

If we follow the lines of the ideal of Jesus, we shall have no difficulty in seeing that Christianity, springing from him, is first of all a life. It is a life as good as life can be made, in all the three great relations, namely, toward God, in one's self, and toward other men.

The most striking fact about the ideal of Jesus is that it is so thoroughly a vital and practical ideal. It is a working ideal, to be realized by living men in real character and conduct. It is no dream, no poetical fancy, no vision in the clouds. If Jesus walks with his head in the heavens, his feet are always on the earth. His ideal is as present and practical as an ideal of perfection in a handicraft. His work has no place except in life. We cannot have studied his utterances without being aware of this. He does not even teach men a doctrine of life: he simply teaches them to live. This is a clear and unquestionable deduction from all that we have been studying about what he said and did. Was it not always his aim to give men principles to act upon, and inspire heart and will to action? Was it not his purpose that truth in the inward parts should work itself out in all virtue and godliness, righteous-

ness, and helpful work? What he had in view was action, living response, the soul at work.

Look back at what we have already seen in this study. When we looked at the picture of the high aim that was shown us in his temptation and his ministry, we beheld Jesus himself as a living soul, meeting the facts of life, living in the midst of them as God's own Son, and winning a concrete victory on the field of life. When he spoke of the kingdom of God, he spoke of a spirit and manner of life that was entering this present world, to transform personal character, to make religion vital, and to fill society with self-devoting service. When he discoursed of righteousness, he did not lay down a doctrine of its nature or give scholastic instruction about the way to obtain it: he spoke to living men who needed it but had false ideas of it, and told them what character it consisted in, and in what kind of conduct they must put it in practice. When he talked of love to God and the neighbor, he was not laying down a doctrine, but was proclaiming the spirit in which men must needs live in the secret heart and in the open daylight, in the hour of prayer and in the day of neighborly service. When he expounded the filial life with God as Father, he was simply exhibiting the normal life of man in its eternal connection with divine reality, and bringing supreme fulness into the daily round. When he gave counsel concerning deliverance from evil, and offered it to men, of course he was dealing with nothing else than actual life; he touched it

even more closely and deeply than if he had spoken of the healing of disease. When he instructed his friends about the liberty of the sons of God, he was not giving them a doctrine of liberty, but was actually setting live men free from the bondage of dead institutions and false authorities. It is from his impartation of the fact of liberty that we draw a doctrine of liberty. When he taught the principle of human value, and insisted upon justice in human dealings, he was teaching men how to live together, and elevating their life by the breath of the highest. In all that he said of wealth, and of the rich and the poor, he was working on the plane of the common world, dealing with tangible things, warning against vital temptations, giving object-lessons of daily living. In all his teaching he was teaching men to live, and by his bringing near of the reign of God he was inspiring them to live, offering the grace of God as the source and support of the life to which he would lead them.

If this is Jesus, then any religion that comes forth from him will be, first of all, a life—not primarily a doctrine or an institution, but a life of real men in their real relations. We need not have gone back to his ideal for support of such a statement, however, for religion is life. Other things are true of it, but in its very nature all real religion is a living, experimental thing; no life, no religion. He could not send forth a religion that was not a life. Yet the appeal to the ideal of Jesus is most valuable, for it places it beyond question that if we wish to under-

stand Christianity we must approach it with the conception of life at the front. It will have its doctrines, but they are expositions of the life and of what it implies. It will have its institutions, but they are servants of the life, just as the Sabbath was made for man. But the life itself will be the central fact.

In briefly describing the quality of the life that forms the heart of Christianity, I just now called it life as good as life can be made. I do not know how to set forth the broad and high intent of Jesus any better. If we follow discerningly through his teaching we shall say that he counts upon making life the best that life can be—the best to-day that is possible to-day, and the best that is possible at all when all is done. For this he makes provision. The life that he tells of is a life of man in God, and the divine paternity sustains it as a holy life, the Father's character pouring its quality into the sons. God's own perfection is the type of it, and the impelling power. So the central principle provides for goodness of any and every kind, and makes goodness the goal and expectation of every child of God. This quality in the ideal and counsel of Jesus has never been disputed: Jesus aimed to make good men; so does Christianity. Good men living well the best life—this is the aim of the religion that comes forth from Jesus.

I said also, in my brief summary statement, that this life, which is as good as life can be made, is

life in all the three great relations. There are just three great relations that make up life for every man, and we cannot have studied the ideal of Jesus without perceiving how wonderfully he makes provision for them all. In the life that he lives a man is related to God, to himself, and to other men. There are no other relations to be counted; these make up life. Now, the life that Jesus sets forth is life in each and all of these relations, and in each of them it is the best life that can be. Jesus has not spoken of this in scholastic terms or proposed this analysis of life. But if we have followed attentively through the study of his words we have heard him tell most clearly and impressively how a man must live with God, how he must live in himself, and how he must live in his relation with his fellow-men. And we know that when we are studying life in these three relations that Jesus described we are studying the life that is characteristic of Christianity, since Christianity is his. The life that his ideal sets forth is the life in which Christianity as a fact in the world consists. Therefore, in order to represent Christianity aright, we must summarize the testimony of Jesus respecting the true life in the three great relations.

Toward God, it is a life of filial trust and loyalty, the life of a child in the divine family. It is a life in which a man trusts the grace of God to deliver him from evil, and labors with it loyally to that end. A life of undying fidelity to God the Father and the Lord; of love to him because he is supremely worthy; of love that finds expression not merely or

mainly in worship or admiration, but more in delight in all outworkings of his character and consecration to the doing of his will. A life in which the Father's character is welcomed as one's inheritance, the Father's presence is light and joy, and the Father's will is the chosen good. It is a life of liberty under God's sole lordship, and one in which the free effort of the entire man goes out toward living in the Father's character. Such is Jesus' ideal of the life with God. Thus he lived himself.

In one's self, it is a life of simple and genuine goodness. It is a life from above, not born of this world though it is truly human, but offspring of God the Saviour of men. A life of deliverance from sin through God's free grace and one's own strong striving. A life simple, lowly, sincere, genuine, in which there is no pretence but honest reality before God, and virtue is one's own. A life not governed by external rules that dictate and must be obeyed, but directed by inward principles that control and affections that inspire. In one's self, by a most blessed paradox, it is a life in which self is least: it is devoted to ends without one's self, in the realm where selfishness does not rule. A life, as Jesus himself illustrates, in which self-consciousness is scarcely more than a means to something better, and aspiration in one's own behalf is but a minor thing, and the self with all that it includes is at the disposal of God and men. Here is its true innermost: it has learned from the cross-bearing Christ the lesson of the burden-bearing God, and seeks to bear his like-

ness. This sympathy with the redeeming heart of God is the highest goodness. Such is Jesus' ideal of the life that a man should live in himself.

Toward other men, we see at once, if we follow on, it is a life of love and of the helpfulness of love, animated by eager desire to do good and the highest good. A life unselfish and self-sacrificing, in fellowship with him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; hence a life of strong social impulse and service. A life aglow with the sense of human value in sympathy with Jesus, and quick to recognize and act upon it in all relations; responsive to the call of justice; irrepressible in the spirit of help. A life not narrow or short-sighted, but broad in its inclusion of the many kinds of helpfulness and means of doing good. A life whose impulses recognize the identity of the call of men with the call of God and Christ, and whose vital breath is outgoing love. In it divine forgiveness, cleansing from sin, the uplift of hope, and the personal welfare and victory are all precious for their own sake, but precious also and still more because they release and empower the soul for fellow-workmanship with God in saving men and bringing in the kingdom of his righteousness. Such is Jesus' ideal of the life that one should live in relation to other men. Thus he lived and died.

It is thus a life of union and fellowship with God and his Christ in all goodness of character, and in self-devotion to the good of men. In it the redeeming work of Christ has become not only a means of personal salvation, but a revelation of God in heaven

and a mastering inspiration for service on earth. It follows the King who has gone to his throne through sacrifice. And in everything it is a life of high and steadfast aim, held unswervingly from first to last, in the face alike of threatening and allurement, of life and death.

I think this is a fair description of the life that Jesus has portrayed for us as his ideal. We know that Christianity is a life, and one that corresponds to the ideal of its Founder; wherefore we may be sure that we are now in the way of finding out what it really is. If we sum up this testimony of Jesus, we shall say that Christianity is a life, toward God of filial trust and loyalty, in one's self of genuine goodness, and toward men of self-sacrificing helpfulness, the inner principle being fellowship with God, who loves that he may save. This is not a definition of Christianity, but I offer it as a statement of the essential nature of Christianity. It has been derived from no source but the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and it is a fair summary of his testimony. It is so true that we cannot conceive of replacing it by any other statement differing radically from it. If at heart Christianity is something different from this, then our sources of knowledge concerning it are altogether misleading. It is safe, therefore, to affirm that the vital quality of Christianity has here been truly set forth. This is the ideal that filled the soul of Jesus: this is the ideal that he cast forth into the world for men to learn and live by. And our account of it is not complete until we have said that

Jesus gave it forth as a gift of almighty God, that the realizing of it in human life is the enterprise of God, and that the power by which the new life is to be produced, maintained, and completed is the gracious power of God. Christianity is of God, and God is in Christianity.

In the comprehensiveness and completeness of this ideal of Jesus we find a lesson concerning the range and scope of Christianity. If it corresponds to the ideal of Jesus, Christianity is no fractional thing, applying only to some part of life. It covers the whole. All parts, aspects, and qualities of human life are included here. Jesus has spoken to us concerning the living of man with God, or the religious life. He has spoken of individual character and conduct, or the ethical life in the personal field. He has spoken, too, of the living of man in relation with his fellows, or the social life. He has gathered these three into an effective moral unity, pervading them all with a single character and motive, making success in each essential to success in the others. His ideal life is a life that is totally Christian, Christian throughout. All its standards are Christian, and all its activities are inspired by the Christian heart and mind. There are no omitted places. He sees life whole, and designs to make it whole, Christian altogether. We do injustice, therefore, to him and his religion if we ever think of Christianity as a stream flowing through the field of life, or as a department of our existence, or as an influence that is intended

to affect a certain part of our character and conduct. Very often it has been represented so; the name Christian has been confined to that which is distinctly and technically religious. Once for all we must drop that usage and habit of thought if we are to follow the ideal of Jesus. When we have learned of him we shall think of Christianity as a power that penetrates and transforms the whole of life. All character is to be Christian character, all activities are to become Christian activities. No longer is any part of life secular as contrasted with sacred, for the secular is sacred; no longer is any part ethical as distinct from religious, for the ethical is religious; no longer is any part exempt from the one all-pervading quality and power. Life is not divided; now alone has it become one.

The ideal of Jesus shows us with equal clearness that Christianity is no fractional thing with reference to its relation to the human race. As life is not divided, so neither is humanity. In the thought of God it is sent forth as his gift to all men. We cannot think otherwise when we compare the life that Jesus has portrayed with human nature. The truth is that the ideal of Jesus represents the normal human life. This is the life to which man is adapted, and in which his natural destiny can be attained. Life rightly and happily grounded in God, life full of all goodness in itself, life unselfishly devoted to the good of all—there is nothing better than this: this is the ideal and normal human existence. Life is not normal with any part of this left out. This is as

good for one man as for another, and for one tribe or nation as for another. It is not good for any part of humanity to be without it. Bent upon lower aims and cherishing lower tastes, men may often think they want something else, but what they really want is the religion, the character and the consecration that Christianity proposes. The Christianity of Jesus is universal in its adaptation. But we know that a God who has provided a gift of normality for his creatures cannot have provided it with merely a fraction of them in his mind. He has not divided the race of man into parts, and determined that only a fraction of them can be allowed to have the gift. God means Christianity impartially; that which he has adapted to all men he has addressed to all men. "God so loved the world." It is therefore no incidental fact that Christianity is a missionary religion. The impulse to extend itself and impart itself is of its very life. They who have received so inestimable a gift of God and have no impulse to bring the same to others have not really received it for what it is, but have misunderstood it; they have discerned some of its points, but its great vital point they have not seen. When Christianity is rightly grasped, there is no need of special commands to create missionary duty. The missionary impulse is of Christianity itself. The normal religion for mankind cannot be kept in a corner.

Native to Christianity is the impulse to do good of every kind to men of every kind. We have been

speaking of the two great unities, unity of life and unity of mankind, that are contemplated in the ideal of Jesus. In the same ideal these two are blended in a great unity of fellowship and help, world-wide in its range, and wide as human need in its variety. All kinds of service for the good of mankind are contemplated by Christianity, suggested by the Christian motive, and fostered by Christian influence. This has not always been perceived or believed in, and works of help for humanity have often been divided into classes and reckoned as Christian and non-Christian; but it is only by misunderstanding that they can be classified thus. Christianity is the parent and impeller of effort of every kind to do good to men. Nothing human is foreign to its heart. The absolute universality of its field of usefulness cannot be denied or doubted if our judgment is guided by the ideal of Jesus. Christians have no right to look askance at any endeavor to do good to men, as if it were not of their kin and company. Christian fellowship has often been taken to be fellowship in doctrinal belief, or even in churchly practice. Better far, it has been found in experience of the great salvation, in common prayer and praise, in mutual affection, in one faith on earth and one hope of heaven. This is all genuine, but the fellowship that is most profoundly Christian is fellowship with Jesus in the spirit and practice of doing good. Christians are in deepest fellowship when they are comrades of the cross with Christ and one another, in self-sacrificing usefulness. It is on the cross that

Jesus shows us what his spirit is, and the cross is not only the symbol of self-giving love, but the summons to fellowship in the same.

The life that thus constitutes Christianity is a life of salvation; that is to say, it is a life of human beings who have been and are being saved by God out of evil into the goodness for which they were created. It is a life in which such salvation is going on, and in which salvation gives its tone of joy and hope and power to the common experience.

I have said that whoever looks at the ordinary life of mankind and then at the ideal life according to Jesus will know that between the two as facts there must lie a deliverance from evil. As Jesus testifies, God is the Saviour of men, and man works together with God in his salvation. The Christian life is one in which this work of God is going on, and man's work with it, and men are growing in the true character of sons of God. The Christian experience is not precisely the same to any two persons, but it is alike to all in being an experience of salvation. Accordingly it is full of vitality. God's forgiveness of sins is in it, received by faith. God himself is in it, the Father. Sense of new life is in it, exhilarating. New love of goodness is in it, transforming. Love is in it, cheering the heart and sustaining all good endeavor. Hope is in it, for this life and that which is to come. It opens out everywhere into the infinite and eternal, and the joy of God belongs to it. This

incomparable quality varies in all possible degrees because of human weakness or limitation, but by its nature the life that constitutes Christianity has the vigor of newness, the strength of confidence, the glow of joy, the sense of being the best life that can be.

This life, with its triumphant quality as a life of salvation, rightly bears the name of Jesus Christ, by whom it has been established as a living fact. Looking upon him we do not merely see his visible self; he stands for God. In him God has been manifested in the flesh; that is, in him God has been clearly expressed to men upon the very plane of their life. He has revealed the saving love of the holy God, and rendered it effective in the new divine life. All the untold sum of Christian good stands identified with him, and he must always stand as the representative of the religion and the salvation. Jesus is the messenger of the grace that saves, the bearer of our sins in our sight as God is the bearer of our sins beyond our sight, the evidence that real redemption is actually wrought for us through divine self-sacrifice, the Word of God uttering salvation, the brother with divine heart breaking with the love that it bears, the living embodiment of the character that salvation works, the winner of men into fellowship with God, the King who goes to his throne bearing his cross and empowering men to follow him in his redemptive pilgrimage. He can never lose his place as the head of Christianity, not merely because he is its historical initiator, but because in his self-expres-

sion he brings us to God, and unites us to himself as he is united with the Father.

When we consider the high nature of Christianity, it is not surprising that the word Christian is used with much latitude of meaning. If we put into the word all that ideally belongs to it, it denotes all that is high and worthy both in religion and in ethics. If the complete significance is understood to be always in the name, no one will dare call himself a Christian. Using the word at all in this imperfect world, we are compelled to apply it where the facts fit it only in part. But the Master would approve this. Looking out upon the world at any given moment, he could not behold a Christendom of completed Christians. All that he can expect to behold is men on the way. No one has yet attained to the full result of his salvation, or will attain it in this world: there is more beyond. All Christians are unfinished; wherefore all Christian facts and works are such as can exist in a world of uncompleted children of the good Father. Christianity itself is still a living and growing thing. Therefore the word Christian constantly bears something less that its ideal fulness of meaning. A man who may be called a Christian is not necessarily a perfect specimen. He is living the life with some degree of success, and counts fairly on the Christian side. It doth not yet appear what he is to be, but he is a man who is on the way to a child's likeness to the Father. There is no way of defining a Christian more closely, for the

experience of the new life takes innumerable forms, and minutely exacting definitions are certain to be unjust. In consequence of all this it naturally follows that the name Christian is applied somewhat loosely to facts and institutions in the world. We call our civilization a Christian civilization—which it is in parts, while in some respects the ideal of Jesus is utterly at war with it. We must learn to distinguish things that differ, and apply the sacred name with discernment and keen conscience; and yet our Lord would have us just and charitable judges, able not only to see faults, but to recognize the Christian reality wherever it exists.

Because Christianity is a life, it will always have its institutions, servants of the life, and its doctrines, explanations of the life. Because it is thus far an uncompleted life, its institutions must be expected to lack something of the ideal character, and its doctrines will be feeling their way toward perfect apprehension of the truth. The institutions will naturally vary from age to age, for life means variety. Different nations and races, living in various times and conditions, will build up institutions for the Christian life under the various impulses of their own nature, and the Master would encourage such variation as living reality requires. At the end of a chapter that assigns to Christianity such qualities as have been attributed to it here, it is quite impossible to say that it will be represented through ages by unchanging institutions. It is too much alive for that.

As for the Christian doctrines, they are explanations of the Christian life, and expressions of the various truth which it involves. So vital a fact must have its doctrines, burdened with the greatness of God, rich with the tenderness of Christ, practical as love and righteousness. Its doctrines are men's analysis and description of it, the best that they can make. Of course they can never be single and uniform, the same to all, for genuine spiritual visions can never be the same to all who behold them, and there is no way to represent a great experience in unchanging formulas. Nor, so long as Christianity is a living thing and not a relic, can any statements of doctrine be final. Thought will always be busy with the great themes, and as long as men think they will see new light. Progress is a necessary form of the life of doctrine, each generation adding something to the work of the past and offering something new to the future. Christian doctrine is thus bound to be an ever-moving stream of intellectual and spiritual appreciation, and in its movement is its power. The steadfastness and the variability are both due to the fact that doctrine is the expression of a life that never fails.

The word that best gathers up the central truth concerning Christianity is the great word of the Fourth Gospel, "I am come that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

XIV

THE CHURCH

If we have obtained some conception of the Christianity into which the ideal of Jesus has wrought itself, we must go farther and inquire about the Christian Church. I do not propose to define it as an existing thing, but to inquire what in the light of the living Jesus it ought to be. What would it be if it were formed upon the lines of his ideal? What manner of organized body would correspond to the Christianity of Jesus? It may seem overbold to ask this question and attempt an answer. It may be thought, at any rate, that one man's answer to it can be only a subjective thing, worthy of no general attention. Nevertheless I cannot feel that it ought to be so very difficult to trace the ideal of Jesus out to its appropriate result in organization and be reasonably sure that we are reaching a congruous conclusion. It seems to me that this lesson is one that can be learned.

Our best guide is the manner in which the earliest organization arose. It did not arise in Jesus' lifetime. Save that he gathered twelve men about him to be trained for service, he built up no organization and started none. Even to these apostles he gave no organization, so far as we know, and he never

intimated that they would have successors to serve perpetually as officials in his church. But organization was sure to come after he had gone. Men will combine when they have a powerful common life and purpose, and these the Christians had. The organization, first at Jerusalem and afterward elsewhere, was so natural and simple that we can understand it well. It came spontaneously, because it was wanted: there was something for it to do. It arose to accomplish a purpose, and the purpose is so plain that we can state it without the slightest uncertainty. Churches sprang up, in Jerusalem, in Antioch, and elsewhere, for the purpose of taking care of the life in which Christianity consisted, and of promoting the work which the life had to do. The church was called into being to maintain Christianity, and to accomplish its object.

This origin of the church corresponds entirely, I am sure, to what I have called the ideal of Jesus. It sounds like him as we have been hearing him. If he had been asked to what intent his disciples should organize themselves when he was with them no longer, we know enough of him to judge that he would have bidden them organize for the protection, nourishing, and training of the new life that they were living, and for the promotion of the work which the new life was bound to undertake. And, if we have felt his atmosphere rightly in the Gospels, he would not have been likely to dictate the form and manner of their organization. Counsel that is like the Jesus to whom we have been listening would be,

"Organize to make the most of the new life and its work, and do it in the way that will serve the purpose best." This at any rate is just what they did, for their churches were not all alike. We cannot well picture the Jesus whom we know as deciding beforehand upon the form of organization that would serve the new life best in all times and conditions, or affirming that any one form would do that. The early Christians were faithful to the mind of their Master when they organized themselves as simply and informally and variously as they did.

I suppose that my statement of the purpose of the church would be accepted by all bodies that have ever called themselves churches. They would all say that they existed, and ought to exist, in order to take care of the Christian life and promote the Christian work. But of course this is a very flexible idea of purpose, and certain to produce much variety in organization and in organized life. What does the Christian life need for its support and welfare, and what is the work which it is called to do? Churches will differ in their structure according as these questions are differently answered. Differences in conditions also will modify the needs that organization must meet. So one form for all times and seasons is impossible. At first very simple structure sufficed, and for a time the original simplicity was not much modified. But as the new faith spread, new conditions arose that seemed to require, and probably did require, new modes of organizing to serve the origi-

nal end. Scattered Christian communities were lonely, often ill-trained, and often insufficient to the work that opened before them. Unity was hard to maintain, and even to establish. Neither local interests nor larger interests seemed well provided for, and there seemed to be need of more organization, administration, and centralization of control. Gradually the stronger bodies assumed more charge over the weaker. An official unity grew up to guard the spiritual unity and to do the large work with better effect. To fulfil the original purpose as it had come to be understood, organization became more elaborate and comprehensive, until at length a world-filling church had been built up, vested with authority. But a natural result was that the official unity tended to take the place of the spiritual unity which it had risen to guard.

Meanwhile it had come to be believed that the Christian life was dependent upon sacraments. Outward acts performed by due authority were taken to be the means of effecting the regeneration that Christianity involves, and of bringing in that divine presence on which the life depends. The sacramental method was unknown to Jesus if we may judge from his utterances and the tone of his life, and certainly there is no place for it in his ideal of the relation between God and man. He always contemplates divine reality in inward experience, and instead of providing for having it mediated through indispensable outward acts, he sends the soul straight to the Father who seeth in secret, and makes com-

munication between spirit and Spirit direct. But when the later idea had been accepted, it was natural that the church should claim the privilege of ministering to her children the grace of God through sacraments, and this practice in turn modified the church and confirmed its high prerogatives. But this process did not altogether destroy the simpler idea of Christian organization, and in later times it bloomed anew. In the modern age, many organizations have grown up to fulfil the original purpose of the church. Where the dictation of an authoritative church was absent, all the more various grew the churches. They have taken many forms, differing widely though they fell into a few groups. It is safe to say that no one of them has existed in vain. They have all existed, whether most wisely and effectively or not, for the service of the Christian life and work, and with greater or less efficiency they have all done what the church arose to do.

Thus Christian organization began in a manner that corresponded well to the ideal of Jesus, and has never wholly departed from it. Yet we cannot claim that his ideal contemplated such a condition as the present. Now we have two great authoritative churches denying each other's authority, and a host of minor churches recognized by neither and strenuously rejecting both, while among themselves they can scarcely call one another churches with a free heart and a full meaning. Something has gone wrong. The ideal of Jesus certainly has not had its way. We cannot hope to revolutionize the situation

by discussing it, but I think I see what is the most wholesome thing that we can do. If we can only set the whole matter in the light of the countenance of that matchless Personality to whom we have been listening; if we can submit it all to the influence of the sane and spiritual ideal that is characteristic of him, he who never described the church but left his followers to frame it in accordance with what they had learned of him will be our best guide in present judgment.

If the first Christians began rightly, as I judge that they did, it would seem that Jesus projected into the future the need and purpose of a church, rather than the form of a church. He was leaving in the world a life to be lived, and a church would be adapted to protect it and to utilize it. For this the early churches sprang up, each in its own field. They were not all alike, for some were patterned after the Jewish synagogue and some after local organizations of the Gentile world, but they were all aimed at the one purpose, and therefore all were Christian churches. This is well akin to the mind of the Jesus of the gospels, to whom purpose is so much and form so little. His view of life, so far as we can read it, would seem to suggest many Christian bodies, not necessarily all alike in mode and structure, all devoted to the care of the Christian life and the doing of its work, recognizing one another in the fellowship of this common purpose, and held together in the unity of this common work.

Against this reading of the mind of Jesus stands the widespread assumption that Christianity must necessarily be represented in the world by one sole organization, single and unique. Of course millions believe that there is such an organization and they are members of it, and many besides feel that such a body ought to exist. The ideal of an organized universal church, which grew up in the early centuries, still dominates the most of Christendom, and has not been displaced from the reverent imagination of the divided Protestant world. But in the presence of the ideal of Jesus as we have seen it we are led to question the whole assumption. We know that if it is claimed that the religion of Jesus must have a sole organization to represent it, the claim must have the best of support. It must be supported not by a text or two, or by a few expressions here and there, nor, on the other hand, by some ingenious argument. These will never suffice. The claim must have the cordial suffrage of the ideal of Jesus. The figure of the living Jesus must be shown to be in keeping with such an institution. It must appear that the conception of a sole churchly body accords in spirit with the broad view of God, man and life which he proclaimed, and that no other conception does accord with his ideal. For certainly we must assume that he has not projected into the future a demand for something unlike the ideal that appears in his life and words. But when it comes to the case in hand, probably no one ever breathed in the doctrine of a sole and universal church from the unmixed

atmosphere of the Jesus of the Gospels. We should have to modify deeply the picture of him that the Gospels afford, before we could think of him as uttering for all the future the demand for such a church. His ideal in the Gospels looks to a simpler, broader, freer method. Vast formal institutions may have gathered around him, but they cannot look to him for their original inspiration. He spent much of his time in combating the requirements of a great uniform institution and bringing his disciples out from under it, and the tone of his work does not seem favorable to the setting up of another in his name. The original Master was not one to project into the future a successor to the Roman Empire, or any single world-filling institution. Only by reading our own ideals into his can we understand him so. The simplicity and informality of the earliest Christian organization harmonizes with the tone and influence of his life. Simple and flexible structure must belong to an organization that represents the real spirit of the living Jesus.

In one respect, however, the present situation corresponds somewhat to his ideal. There is no one body in the world that can properly be called the Christian church to the exclusion of all others, and there are many bodies that exist to fulfil the purpose of the church. That is, no body is the church in form, many bodies are the church in purpose. Any body that claims to be the only authorized representative of Christianity is ignoring facts concerning other bodies. No such claim can be substantiated in

view of the history of God's work among men. But this is as it ought to be: the Master never meant that any such claim should be defensible. On the other hand, Christendom is full of bodies organized to do just what a Christian church must do, and putting forth their strength for that very purpose. The great bodies that call themselves Catholic or Orthodox, and the smaller bodies that bear a hundred forms and work in a hundred ways, are all one in practical intent, and their intent is exactly that for which the church in Jerusalem was formed and which matches so well the ideal of Jesus. They are all imperfect, but they all exist to take care of the Christian life and promote the work of Christianity in the world. They differ in their methods, but they are one in their end. This also is as it should be. If we read the Master rightly, he never can have intended anything else.

If we follow the light of the ideal of Jesus, it would seem that any body that was organized and living in order to take care of the Christian life and promote the service of Christianity to the world should be recognized as a Christian church. One would think that before now this somewhat obvious Christian definition might have commended itself to the many churches as one that should be applied all round. One would think that a church might long ago have been defined in the light of its purpose, rather than by description of its form or method. Certainly the Master would define it so. But this has not occurred to the Christian people. The many churches

have in common the great point that they all exist for the true purpose of the Christian church, some serving it better than others, no doubt, but all devoted to it, each in a way of its own. Yet they define themselves as churches, and define the church, in view of their differences and specialties. Each of them has defined the church of Christ in its own way, and each in view of some distinguishing mark borne by itself. They do not claim to be true churches because of their relation to the Lord's ideal and purpose for the church, but because of their differences and peculiarities: one is a church because it has the Pope, another because of its orthodox doctrine, another because it is equipped with bishops or with presbyters, another because it is an independent congregation, another because it has the right baptism, and so on. If only they could learn of Jesus here, and look with his eyes, they would view themselves and one another first of all in the light of their common relation to the ideal of their Lord for his church. The definition is an easy one. A church is a body that exists to serve the purpose of a church.

I do not claim that I can draw a true picture of a church as it would be if the ideal of Jesus had its way. No one can do that accurately, and yet to a certain extent the picture is not an impossible one. There is no living model to draw from, for all churches depart more or less from the ideal. Some are practising ideas that harmonize but very poorly with the mind of the Master, and all, in some way

or other, live in another atmosphere than his. All need alike to get a vision of what Jesus would have a church to be, if his view of God and life could have its way. I cannot go far toward a description, but I can set forth the vital points in what a church would be if it accorded with the ideal of Jesus, and even a slight exhibition of them may not be in vain.

The true key for all time is set in the first period, and we hear it sounding there. As we have seen, the church sprang up in the interest of the Christian religious life. Religion is the note. The specialty of the church is religion. The world has been right in calling that which sprang from Jesus a religion. Christianity is a religion first and foremost; its religious aspect is its chief aspect. Therefore it is that the church, which sprang up in the interest of religion, is its chief representative. It stands for Christianity in its religious spirit and power, and therefore represents it in the world as nothing else can. The church is the characteristic institution in which the peculiar life-power of the Christian religion is gathered as nowhere else.

In the Acts of the Apostles we see the church beginning its agelong work in taking care of the Christian life. See what it does. It provides the Christian life with a home, warms it with fellowship, feeds it with spiritual food, keeps it in health through activity. This is a fair picture of the permanent work which it has to do. The church welcomes the Christian life, nourishes it, trains it up. It summons it to acknowledge the divine goodness in worship, prayer

and praise. It ministers for its nourishment and edification the truth as it is in Jesus, the word of life. It encourages the Christian life in its proper habits of expression, and sets before it its normal work. It makes warm company for it to live and grow in. It keeps the divine hopes and consolations ready for use in time of need. It keeps the windows open toward heaven, and the heart attuned to heavenly influence. It is thus the helper, sustainer, educator of the Christian life within itself. How beautifully this work coincides with the evident intention of Jesus, who left the life young, weak, and unguarded in an unfriendly world! He meant it to unite for self-defence and training, and still are his disciples organized for the common protection and development of their highest life in him.

Equally do they honor his ideal when they organize to do the work of Christianity in the world. This lies beyond self-training as an end. This is for others. So the church preaches the gospel of the grace of God, not only to nourish itself but to save men around it. It expounds to the world the truth that is in Jesus. It makes converts to the faith, by its best endeavors both in persuasion and in godly example and influence. It seeks to convey the gift of Christ to mankind. So it organizes missions near and far, and sends the life abroad to win its way. It is the living expression of the love of God in Christ toward men, loving the world as God loves it and seeking to save. The church is the voice of Christianity, uttering its heart. It does good as it has opportunity to all men

in all ways. It stands for righteousness and human fellowship. It promotes good morals as a part of the true life of man. It proclaims and helps forward the coming of the kingdom of God. In all this how beautifully it is living out the ideal of Jesus, who left the new life unorganized, but sure to follow its nature into such a union of its forces for doing its work upon the world!

With religion as thus the specialty of its work, it is plain that the church of the ideal of Jesus will have religion as the specialty of its character. It cannot efficiently nourish or extend a life that it does not possess and make much of. That is to say, the fine religious quality that we find in Jesus himself and in all his ideal is its characteristic. Its heart is open to the Father, its resort is unto him who sees in secret, its trust in God is a loyal confidence, its righteousness is the genuine response of the soul to the voice of God within, its morality is inspired from above, and its love to man is a part of its devotion to God.

There is one word that expresses a quality central to the life of the church of the ideal of Jesus. That word is helpfulness. We trace the quality in the beginning, for were not all the churches formed to help—to help the Christian life that needed nourishing and cherishing, and to help the world to find its life in Christ? The same quality shines out in the church as I have just portrayed it. Helpfulness toward one another within, toward the neighbors who need to know their God, toward the world far and near, helpfulness as opportunity offers—this is the

tone in which the keynote of religion sounds. Religion itself is helpfulness as soon as it looks out through the eye and moves out in the hand of the individual. Religion is helpfulness as soon as it organizes itself for its congenial work. Was not this the spirit of the kingdom? He who said, "I am among you as he that serveth," he who called himself the physician of the sinful, has this for the type and character of his church, that it is a helpful body, serving men in the spirit of him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. It lives not unto itself, but serves God in serving men.

The church is the central representative of Christianity in the world, as we have seen; but when we have looked at it in the light of this quality of helpfulness, it is plain that it cannot be the sole representative. There are others. Christianity inspires helpfulness so broadly that no one institution can possibly be its only representative. It inspires all kinds of self-sacrificing service: it serves the King by serving the least of his brethren, wherever they are. Not all works of helpfulness lie equally near its spiritual centre, but they all lie within the circle of its inspiration. This means that Christianity inspires work of helpfulness of which no one body could possibly undertake the whole. If it tried to act as the sole and complete representative of Christianity, the church would be compelled to neglect its first calling, scatter its energies, and do nothing well. There must be division of labor. Numberless human betterments that Christianity inspires must

have their own organizations distinct from the church, and these represent Christianity too in their own place, being true offspring of its heart and servants of its purpose. To use the common illustration, some one else will clear the Jericho road of robbers, while the good Samaritan takes care of the wounded man, and they will both be serving one cause. But if the church lives in the ideal of Jesus, its warmest heart and hand are given in fellowship to these works. Humanitarian works outside the distinctly religious field are well accustomed to receive the cold shoulder from the church, which has suspected their motives and withheld from them its sympathy. But when the ideal of Jesus inspires the church, it will know that organizations for human benefit are its allies. It will hold them in warm sympathy and give them its perpetual benediction. It will not be a question whether such works are to have its friendship, counsel, and commendation. It will be at their right hand, and will train its people to take part in them when their help is needed.

There is no hint in the ideal of Jesus that the church will exercise its function of helpfulness in the method of authority. The church might be the authority in religion according to the ideals of this world, but not according to that of Jesus. "It shall not be so among you." An authoritative church is not like the Jesus to whom we have been listening. His appeal is made without reserve to the human judgment and conscience, and we rise from listening to him with the impression that nothing must inter-

fere with the direct relation between the soul and God. He knows no one between God and man. In the name of God he sets men free from ecclesiastical domination of the olden time, and the principle that sets them free would keep them free. No one can come between—unless indeed God should depute his authority to the church and make it equal to himself. But that, in the light of Jesus, appears impossible. The peculiarity in God that sets the soul free from all other masters is not of a kind to be deputed, even to a church. It is grounded in an unchangeable and untransferable relation. The soul that responds to it must recognize this authority in God himself and there alone. While we listen to Jesus we cannot imagine him telling his disciples that any one whatever could represent God in his relation to their consciences, or that any one could be deputed by him to decide what they must think of truth, or believe about facts, or judge concerning duty. A church that corresponds to his ideal will be a church of freemen, and its help to its people will be such help as freemen can best profit by. It will be a guide and counsellor to them, but will not be burdened with the responsibility of ruling their souls. For exemption from this it will be thankful. For men created to think, authority is not the best form of help.

Accordingly the ideal church is not an imposer of creeds. This form of authority in a church seems especially incongruous with the personality and influence of Jesus in the Gospels. We cannot imagine the

Jesus whom we know as dictating beliefs in theology to his disciples, or directing them to dictate to one another, or authorizing man or church to dictate to them. He gave no sign of any disposition to require intellectual agreement or uniformity among those who learned of him. He never discussed the intellectual aspects of the truth that he proclaimed. He proposed no creedal tests, and his influence is not of a kind to suggest them. He calls men to live the life with God, he teaches them righteousness, love, and self-sacrifice, he gives them liberty to welcome the voice of God whispering in the ear, he trains them for the service of the kingdom, but he does not speak as a master of rigidity, insisting upon uniform belief. Not that he does not encourage thought, the deepest and the keenest. He must, for his appeal is to the living soul of man. His people need knowledge, and deep pondering on the deep things of God is a vital part of their experience. Some of them must give their lives to knowing God in thought, and progress in clear thought of him will be one of the great evidences that God is with his children. But thinking and uniformity are impossible companions. If men really think they will differ more or less. Jesus' appeal to the conscience of the individual is an appeal to independent personal thought. We have seen how he delights in genuineness and originality in the inner man. No word of his requires that all who think shall think alike or reach identical conclusions. No word even faintly intimates that the individual Christian must accept the beliefs of the

majority, or agree with great thinkers ancient or modern, or have doctrines dictated to him by the church; nor does his ideal indicate any such expectation or demand. His thought moves in another atmosphere. A prescribed creed is no part of his ideal. He is too thorough a master of reality for that. With him belief, like virtue, must be one's own. A belief accepted because it is prescribed is unreal, and belongs more to the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees than to the better righteousness of the kingdom. The ideal of Jesus calls for a church that will be a wise and friendly helper of its people in respect of their believing, but not a church that will tell them what they must believe.

To sketch the church of the ideal of Jesus in this manner is to stir up a host of practical questions. Probably no reader has failed to see them emerging. If creed retires from its old prominence, still how much creed must there be? and how is it to be formed, and what position shall it hold? What will be the terms of membership in the church of the ideal of Jesus? Will there be any such thing as discipline there? How largely will existing churches come together as they advance toward the goal? But these questions do not need to be answered now. Indeed they are not practical questions yet, but only inquiries. Until we are ready for action they may wait. The first thing is for the Christian people to catch the vision of Jesus and accept their calling. When it has done this it will be time enough to meet the questions of detail that will arise. By that time

the Christian people will have more of the enlarged heart and judgment that is required to deal with them. By that time, too, some of them may have disappeared. Frequently questions are not settled, but left behind.

At present, Christendom is in a situation in which it greatly needs instruction about the church from the ideal of Jesus. In view of its deep divisions Christendom ought to be crying out from the heart, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Faintly as yet, but really, the cry is beginning to arise. It would be wrong, therefore, not to inquire what is the main counsel of the ideal of Jesus for the present time. The need is very sore that all the churches learn their true relation to the great head of the church and to one another, and thus become ready to do their work. What is the lesson for the time?

The ideal of Jesus would teach the Christian people to-day that the duty of the hour is mutual recognition. Churches must recognize one another, according to the principles of the Master's vision. They have been judging one another by tests that would not stand in his presence; they must learn to judge one another by tests that spring from the very heart of his personality and his religion. In his presence we say that the tests of a true church are not external, formal, visible, but spiritual and practical. The essential thing is the life, and devotion to the care and working of the life. It is not necessary that churches be all alike in their organization and prac-

tice, or that all conform themselves to the pattern of any one. They may be very unlike. That which makes them Christian churches is the fact that in spite of imperfection they are alive unto God in Jesus Christ, and are devoted to the care of the Christian life and the doing of the work of Christianity in the world. For defence of this definition there is no need of ingenious arguments, which equal ingenuity may combat: it grows directly out of the life and work of the Master himself. On this principle, spiritual, practical, and true, the ideal of Jesus would send the churches looking for one another for the sake of coming together into working fellowship.

The test is a searching one. A church that has become a club for its own pleasure or advantage is denying the ideal of Jesus. So is one that in any manner has become indifferent to vital religion and lost its desire to live in the divine atmosphere. So is one that holds back its hand from the service of humanity or is indifferent to good morals. So is one that tyrannizes. So is one that is content to go on just as it is, not caring whether the Lord would have it revolutionize its life. A church is loyal to the ideal of Jesus in so far as it makes much of warm and living religion, delights in communion with the Father, believes in divine redemption, is sustained by Christian faith and hope and love; in so far as it seeks the salvation of men at home and abroad in Jesus Christ; in so far as it is a free helper to free souls, a guardian of sound morals, a preacher of the eternal righteousness

and love; in so far as it is a self-forgetful servant to mankind as it has opportunity. The test is a searching one. Tests that relate to form and order are trivial in comparison.

In order that Christian churches may rightly recognize one another, there is need of Christian charity overlooking faults, and of Christian justice giving full weight to virtues. Or, in a word, there is need of the mind of Christ, looking with his eyes upon his own. Of course there is need of disentanglement from the old external methods of judgment, and growth into the spiritual method of the Lord. But with justice and charity combined, and with patience, and with unquenchable purpose to find the inner unity and do justice to the ideal of the common Lord, the road is not so very long to a better Christendom than the Lord has ever seen. When the existing forces have become able to work together according to the mind of Christ, the greater coming of the kingdom will be at hand.

XV

SOCIETY

I CAN remember very well when it would have seemed sufficient to trace the ideal of Jesus to its application in the church, the personal life, and the field of missions. But we must go further. We have not done justice to the intention of the Master until we have looked beyond the distinctly religious embodiment of his ideal, and gained a vision of its application to human society in the large. We must see what it would make of the life that men live together in all the relations in which they stand. This vision Jesus has not sketched for us with any fulness, but he has given us abundant means of sketching it for ourselves, at least in outline. When we ask how men would live together, and what society would be if his ideal were realized in the world, the answer lies very near us and can be indicated in few words. In one aspect the words seem commonplace, they are so familiar; but in a truer light they may well be startling. They will be startling if we shake off our familiarity with them and allow ourselves to perceive how much they mean. Look at them.

Jesus contemplates a state of things in which men shall be inwardly good with a real goodness, and shall be gladly devoted to doing the will of their heavenly

Father. In this sincere and genuine loyalty to God he expects them to conduct the life that they live together as men. All are to bring what they learn from God into their relations with one another. Each is to love his neighbor as himself. All are to act out the Christlike spirit of self-sacrificing helpfulness. Their life together is to be governed by justice, of which the golden rule is the working law. The arrangements of social life are to do justice to the high value of human beings. No man is to be or claim to be master over another's soul, and every conscience is to be answerable to God. Under these vital laws of love, justice, helpfulness, and human value, all life is to be organized and to proceed. In this spirit must be conducted the entire administration of property, gain, wealth, and the relation of the rich and the poor. These are the main points that we have heard Jesus himself expound and illustrate, but we see at once that these are only samples of the whole of life. Classes and nations are to live together on the same principles. No part of the life that men live together is to be exempt from the sway of these simple, righteous, and gracious laws, and men must learn to organize or reconstruct the society in which they live in such manner that these prinples may have their way.

This is a tremendous statement. Incomplete though it is, it is so tremendous that we may start back and wonder whether it can be true. Did Jesus really mean all this? There is strong temptation to deny that any such sweeping application of Christi-

anity to society was ever intended or can be made. There are enormous interests that are bound to deny it in self-defence. As a matter of indifference, the common inertia denies so agitating a view. As a matter of practice, it is very often assumed that Christianity is not a revolutionary force, except upon the hearts and habits of individual men. As a matter of biblical interpretation, many maintain that Christianity is not intended to revolutionize society, but only to transform a group of individuals, while society is left to perish. Thus sin and selfishness and inertia and the testimony of many Christians conspire to assure the social organism that it is to be let alone by the redemptive power of God, honey-combed though it is with unchristian practices.

But if we wish to know whether in its nature Christianity is a revolutionary thing or not, we have only to look at the ideal of Jesus and then at the present world. A very imperfect recapitulation of the working principles of the ideal of Jesus was given in the last paragraph but one. If a reader will count up the institutions and practices known to him as now existing, that would be brought to an end or radically changed by the application of that idea, he can tell at once whether Christianity is a revolutionary thing. Sometimes it seems as if Christianity would make a clean sweep of the methods and institutions of society if it had its way. But that feeling is excessive; it would not do that. There is very much that is good in the life that men live together, and much that Christianity would not destroy, but

would preserve and improve. But all the good is imperfectly developed and expressed, and all is hampered and embarrassed by combination with evil, so that it nowhere has perfect opportunity to be itself and do its work. The good in the social order needs to be set free from the body of death to which it is bound. There are institutions and practices that grew up for the common welfare, that have been sadly perverted to the service of selfishness. The social organism itself grew up to promote the common good, but self-interest has mastered great sections of its life. The evil that is wrought into the social structure has always been in evidence, but is better known to-day than ever. I should be ashamed to put details of social evil upon this page as if they were needed for conviction. Any one who does not know that Christianity would work deep revolution in society if it had its way is ignorant either of society or of Christianity, or of both.

Yet many hold that although Christianity is a revolutionist it is not intended to revolutionize: it is designed to save a group of men for another world, but not to work in this world the beneficent revolution that corresponds to its character. That is to say, God has placed in this world a revolutionary force, but does not intend it to do its work and impart its character to society which is perishing for want of it. This is the outlook of many Christians, but how it differs from a deep infidelity it is hard to see. It signifies that God does not really mean the goodness that he has put in the world in the gospel of his Son.

It comes into the world as a living and powerful goodness, and if it had its way it would undo innumerable evils and purify the all-pervading relations of humanity; but God does not mean that it shall do this. He limits its sphere and intends it for far less good than it is adapted to accomplish. It cannot be, then, that he is as good as in Christianity he seems. Christianity reports a better God than there is, and the being whom Jesus proclaimed as the all-trustworthy Father has no existence. A God who does not mean his own good tidings to the full is not a God to trust.

No, Christianity is revolutionary in power and revolutionary in purpose. It is in the world to make its assault upon the evils that prey upon the human race, and put in their place the fulfilment of the ideal of Jesus. And if this is to be done at all it must be done in the large. Society is the field of Christianity. To bring the sound and godly life to perfection in the narrow field of individualism is impossible. The great laws of life depend upon reciprocity, and cannot be brought to full effect until men are obeying them together. There are duties that are altogether social; high virtues, too, that cannot be exercised except in the social field. The Christian character is a social character as well as a private, and the full victory of Jesus' ideal can be won only by a revolution that touches every fibre of the social heart and every action of the social life.

I do not propose to go through the list and specify the practices and institutions that the revolutionary

ideal of Jesus would condemn and destroy. My purpose does not require that, and besides he would be a bold man who thought he knew enough to pass through the world thus bearing the lamp of judgment. But I am inclined to propose a catechism for private meditation—for discussion, too, if any should care to use it in examination of facts. In studying the Gospels we have had the working principles of the ideal of Jesus set before us in no uncertain form. They are the principles on which Jesus Christ would make a new world of men. It is our duty to look about the world in the light of them, and let their light do its legitimate revealing of facts and needs. They suggest a long line of questions which we are required to ask. The world will have to ask them yet, and not only to answer them in words, but to make its practice correspond. They are beginning to be asked, and the right answers are coming out; but the work is only begun, and the questions are pressing for attention now. They make a heart-searching catechism, profitable for us to ponder on and pray over. I cannot give them all, for the list is endless, but some of them may be set in order here.

What changes would universal deference to God make in the tone and quality of the life that men live together? What if men and women livingly believed in the good God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and really thought that his holy and gracious will was the will for them to do? What would follow if a willing and cheerful reverence for God became the ruling temper in their social existence? What

changes would follow if they habitually looked up in spirit, instead of looking around them or below, and took their standards from that higher world where God gives character to all? What if the desire to be good like the Father, and to act accordingly, were carried into the relations that the business of the world involves? What would happen to all who work together if all the daily work were done as in the sight of God? What if men and women everywhere were possessed by the sane and industrious optimism that springs from faith in the God of all goodness as the God of all? How great and far-reaching a change would such godliness bring in? In what respects would the tone of life be altered? What would the new atmosphere effect? What would retire? and in what order would the ancient evils go?

What has Jesus' ideal of human value to say of existing social facts? How well does common practice correspond to the valuation that he set upon human beings? How is that valuation respected in the use that is made of men, women, and children in great manufactories? How far does it approve the treatment of the great laboring class in general? How justly is human value estimated in the laws and customs that deal with intoxicating drinks? How worthily and honorably do these practices treat the human being? How justly is the real value of women considered in the various uses that men make of them? Do the usages of business put due value upon children, and help them to realize their worth?

What kind of justice is done to human value in dealing with criminals, in the prison systems of the world and in other schemes of punishment or reformation? How far is government devoted to the conservation and improvement of human value? Indeed, how much attention does organized society deliberately pay anywhere to the intrinsic and potential value of anything and everything that is human? How long would it take to impress a legislature with the idea? According to Jesus, human beings are of high intrinsic value, precious to God, invaluable to themselves, capable of great service. To him they were worth the devotion of a lifetime and the laying down of a life. When they were in need he would minister to them; when they were morally sick he would be their physician. What consideration of men does his ideal demand now? In a new construction, what would it substitute for the present treatment of men in manufacturing, of children in labor, of women in the nether world? How would he save these values, now recklessly wasted? What would he substitute for the present elaborate encouragement of drunkenness for which society is responsible? What for the present theories and practice of punishment? What would he do with the great mass of laboring men as they exist to-day, regarded as men precious to God and to themselves, and what would he inspire them to do in their relations with the world which they serve? In these conditions, and in others like them, how would Jesus' ideal of human value work construc-

tively, building up in place of the horrors it had torn down?

What institutions and practices would be affected if the ideal of Jesus came into effect through acting upon the golden rule, "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them"? What practices would cease without daring to ask whether they might continue? What institutions would perish in a night? What modes of living, what contacts and relations between person and person, would be possible no longer? What revolutions would come sweeping in? According to Jesus, this principle of equality and just interchange is the righteous principle for all life of men together. Alongside it too he places the law of love, similar in effect, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The two laws are not the same, and yet what one of them demands the other demands also. The question is not merely what customs they would expel, and what ancient works they would make impossible. Still more vital is the question what they would bring in. It is a vast question that cannot be fully answered at the present stage, but it can be asked from the heart. What customs would society take up if it were to undertake living according to the golden rule and the law of neighbor-love? What new ranges of personal action would be opened? What new methods in the field of business? What new modes of neighborly association? What new and wiser forms of help? What abandonment of ancient social axioms? What discovery and acceptance of new ones on a higher plane?

What would the golden rule and the law of neighbor-love and the sense of human value make of the present system of competition? How would they work among nations? What would they do with war?

What would the ideal of Jesus, godly, just and generous, do with the present modes of getting wealth and handling it? How would it clear the field of ancient wrongs, and what new methods would it set at work? How would it readjust business after dishonesty had gone out and greed had been eliminated? What would it substitute for the old exploiting of human value for the sake of money value? How would it curb the spirit that loves to combine for the sake of power and builds up strong protection for selfish interests? How would it alter the standards of expenditure? What effect would it have upon habits of luxury? According to Jesus, it is impossible to serve God and mammon. How would his ideal convict men of having the spirit that cannot enter the kingdom of God? and how would it cure them of it? By what strong inward convictions and spiritual persuasions would his ideal bring men over from mammon to God? What new modes of distribution of property would come in, more just and equal as well as more helpful? Through what new arrangements would both the rich and the poor live worthier lives, and inherit richer blessing through a better fellowship than they have ever known?

What would happen to-day if society were transformed into the kingdom of God through adoption of

Jesus' spirit of self-sacrificing helpfulness as the spirit of all life? What awakenings would there be? What agelong neglects would cease? What unexpected recognitions would occur? What mighty inspirations of service would take possession of powers long indolent or turned to selfishness? What great new works of fellowship and helpfulness would be undertaken and carried through? What reinforcement of spiritual power and means of working would flow into old enterprises for good? In what new forms would the new passion of grace go forth in the place of the ancient passion of self-seeking and self-interest? According to Jesus, godliness and love to men and justice and the sense of human value all unite to inspire this divine passion, this necessity of helping at whatever cost; and our deepest hearts know that Jesus' view of this divine passion is utterly reasonable and right. What will this passion of the cross be when it becomes a power and runs through the world? Against what will it blaze as wrath? What tyrannies and injustices will it burn up? Into what forms of loving service will it throw itself as life? How long could a thousand disgraces last if the self-giving spirit of Jesus had free course, inspiring men to take up the cross and follow him? How long could any one think that God was unrevealed or had forsaken the earth? How long could humanity resist the warm tide of blessing that came flooding in? How long could the kingdom of heaven be delayed? Nay, the kingdom would have come in power.

So the questions might run on, for there is no end to them. It is a heart-breaking catechism, though it is an inspiring one; inspiring because of the vision that it shows hanging in the air, heart-breaking because the vision still hangs in the air, and the world is so unready to call it down to earth. But this is the catechism that the world has to study. These are the questions that the ideal of Jesus thrusts in upon men living together, to judge the manner in which they live. The problems of society cannot be solved until these questions are answered in Jesus' way, not in theory but in practice. And that a result worthy of the ideal is to be wrought out is the hope, founded in God, that Jesus has inspired. Not that life in this world, with its brief generations and perpetual change, is likely ever to reach a condition in which there can be no change for the better. Transient life does not seem to be organized for moral perfection. But a revolutionary work that shall bring the Christian ideal to successful expression in the common life is to be expected in the world of God. His kingdom is yet to come far more completely.

When we think of such a revolution in the social organism, we cannot help wondering by what kind of process it will be accomplished. The kingdom that Jesus founded will come where he founded it, upon the plane of this present life. It will be brought by God working through man and man working with God. But how? Will the order and methods of the existing world be suddenly abandoned under

the impulse of an awakened conscience, and an organization on new principles built up in its place? Or, in the more evolutionary mode, will changes be made one after another as worthier convictions become strong enough, until society is a Christian thing? Which is the right way in view of the ideal of Jesus? Which hope is the more Christian? Should we plan to take part in the overthrow of the present social order, or in a progressive improvement of it?

Questions of reconstruction often present themselves as first questions, entitled to first attention, but they are not. They are important, but do not hold the primacy. The indispensable revolution does not need to be planned until it has been inspired. Not until then indeed can it be planned in the spirit that must accomplish it. It is not a new theory of society that is needed at once, but a new conscience, a new sense of the manifold need, a new resolve, a new readiness to act. The first question is whether the heart and mind of Christians and of all lovers of their kind are to be awakened to the bringing of the Christian revolution. The first task is that of awakening society to the Christian and the unchristian facts that belong to its life, arousing the sense of responsibility, quickening human fellowship, enlisting the army for the spiritual war. Not that all this can be done in a vacuum: there must be work in hand or the awakening will be no better than interest in a debating society. But there is unquestionable reform enough instantly needed to employ the newly

awakened interest, and the way to much of it is entirely plain. But for the vast issue of universal reconstruction the time is not yet ripe.

Yet the question of future method casts its shadow before, and it is difficult to leave it unnoticed. Many feel that the present social order is so full of wrong as to be incapable of reformation; gradual changes for the better would amount only to patching up an old system that can never be made Christian or anything like it. The only way is to throw it all down and reorganize our common life throughout on more righteous principles. Many are convinced that the world is rushing on toward a reconstruction, not by mending, but by abandonment and complete rebuilding.

Since I have spoken so positively about the ideal of Jesus, claiming that it is adapted to all the requirements of life, I might perhaps be expected to go further and tell what kind of reconstruction it demands and would provide. Does it call for the overthrow of the existing social order, or for its improvement? Which should we plan for, destruction of the ancient system, or renovation? Perhaps I might be expected to record here the convictions of a Socialist or an anti-Socialist, and tell which Jesus would be if he were among us now. But I cannot go into that. On the vast question of the future organization of society I am not certain that I have any present message. I do not feel that I know the great world well enough to know the true solution of the problem of social method. I am not wise enough to see just

how the ideal of Jesus would work itself into expression in the institutions of a world.

But meanwhile some things are certain. It is certain that the Christian way is to put social evils away as rapidly as we can see the way to do so. If we cannot annihilate them at a stroke, as on the field of society we certainly cannot, the ideal of Jesus would inspire us to limit them, to diminish them, to deprive them of their opportunity and cut off their power, to educate the people away from them. This duty belongs to individuals and to groups; but individuals and groups have but limited opportunity to do such work. For many evils no individual is responsible, and no group, but society itself—if not for their origin, at least for their preservation, protection, and encouragement—and society ought to do its duty in putting them away. But how? Society seems a scattered and unmanageable thing. Yes, in some respects, but not in all. For many purposes of righteousness, society is expressly an organized body by virtue of its law-making power. This being so, the ideal of Jesus would bid society use its power of government against very many social evils.

Much cynical nonsense has been talked about the impossibility of making people moral by legislation. Of course it is true that the Christian ideal of inward righteousness cannot be attained in that manner; that is too plain to be talked about. But that is no reason why that which is possible should not be done. We cannot make men righteous by law, but by law we can make them quit a host of unrighteous

practices. Society legislating can restrain the wicked and protect the weak and give life its opportunity; it can lift the pressure of injustice from many who suffer wrong; it can rank itself on the side of humanity in a thousand matters; it can organize many a work of helpfulness and assist the Christian spirit in its service. It cannot do any of these things completely, but it can do them well enough to work vast improvement in the present situation. The Christian ideal summons all governments to be its agents, doing what lies within their power to help it win its victory. In this there is no union of Church and State; the truth is simply that Jesus utters his call to society organized as government, to join in working out his righteous principles. All this seems so obvious as scarcely to deserve the space that I have given it on the page. Nevertheless it is not in vain to speak once more of the sound relation of human law to the Christian ideal. The ideal of Jesus requires that society should freely use its self-governing power for promotion of the righteousness with which life must be filled.

And of course it is equally obvious and yet equally worth saying, that the ideal of Jesus calls for effort, labor, patience, concert, combination, organization, of every effective sort, for doing away with evils in the social field. All workers must be welcome, and a new unity must grow up, the unity of effort to bring the kingdom of God in social righteousness and help. The church has its calling, but cannot do more than a little fraction of the work. All organi-

zations for social betterment are workers together with God and the church for the fulfilment of the ideal of Jesus. The church that has not a warm right hand of fellowship for each and all of them is not acting therein as a church of Jesus Christ, but is laying its high character aside.

It may be felt that these hints of present duty look toward the realization of the ideal through progressive change, rather than through a sudden overthrow; by breathing life into the old social organism, rather than by slaying it that another may be created. That is true, I must confess. It certainly is our Christian duty to make progressive change in the social organism just as fast as we can; whether a convulsion is coming or not, this is the method that is now in operation, with the sanction of all that is good. Thus far certainly God has brought in his kingdom step by step. History bears witness and encourages our hope of the coming of the kingdom through progressive change. That is to say, it encourages our hope if we can lift up our eyes to look at long periods. If we are in great haste, there is no way to be hopeful but through expecting a great convulsion—though how convulsion is to do the work of experience it is hard to see. But if we can wait for the end while we are in haste for the progress, we may take hope from the testimony of the past that God brings his kingdom step by step.

A glance at the fortunes of the ideal may help us to see in what quarter hope lies. It may help us too

to bring the tribute of our loyal sympathy to Jesus, whose ideal we are watching on its way to victory.

When Jesus gave voice to his ideal in his life, it was his and no one else's. He knew that no other saw the vision that he beheld; no one else saw God and man and life as he saw them. He sought to impart his ideal to his disciples and educate them in power to discern it, and he offered it to all who heard him, for them to receive it as they were able. In some degree he gave it to his friends, but only in rudimentary fashion did they discern what was so clear to him. They were still at the beginning of their education. So when he went away he knew that the ideal that filled his heart was left in a world where no one saw it as yet, except in glimpses. Nevertheless he went away and left it so; and very beautiful and touching is the confidence in which he left his vision of what ought to be, in a world that had scarcely yet begun to see it. And yet that the world might see it was the purpose of his appearing.

Of course he could not expect that his ideal would be realized soon. He could only throw it out into the world for men to learn, to practise as they were able, and to master when time and opportunity might permit. That is to say, his ideal had nothing before it but long warfare to find expression through imperfect agents, and realization through crude endeavors. It was certain that different men, groups, nations, races, would not only apprehend it differently, but misapprehend it differently, and bring all sorts of faults and errors into its company. Various modes of

life would bring it into various applications and work out various results, and all would react upon the ideal itself to modify it in their minds. Understanding of it could be wrought out only by long experience, that is, by experiment, success, and failure. There is unspeakable pathos in the fortunes of the good in an evil world, and nowhere is it deeper than in the history of Jesus' ideal of human life. Naturally, for it is the highest ideal of life that has ever been cast forth into the world of men, and it was offered to men whose very need of it rendered its troubles certain.

After his departure the great enlightenment of the divine Spirit came upon his friends, and their eyes were opened to see the beauty and value of what he had given them. As a result the ideal of Jesus, now better discerned and loved, took its place among the life forces of the age. It was the purest ideal of life in existence, and the most exacting, and yet the most winning, for all who felt their need. It inspired such life and character as the world knew not of, and it glowed with a contagious energy such as no other ideal possessed. But the inevitable variation began at once. It appears already within the New Testament. The Pauline and Johannine conceptions of God and life are there, and others besides, and while they are all alike at heart they reveal genuine differences. To all these new watchers for the future, what Jesus intended to accomplish was the same, and yet it was not conceived in the same manner by any two of them, nor did they think alike of the way in which he was to win his victory. Each in his own

way the Christian laborers were working toward the coming of the kingdom, but with various conceptions both of the means and of the end. The vision of Jesus hung before them all, but they saw it in many lights and with unequal clearness. It was the same to them all, and yet not the same.

The cause of the difference is perfectly simple. The ideal of Jesus, discerned by various men with various degrees of clearness and justice, entered in their minds into union with their various experiences, characters, views, prepossessions, and modes of life. It influenced all these by its high quality and power, but in turn it was influenced by them in as many ways as there were minds, and modified in its quality as a working force.

We might wonder at this and regret it. Why, we might ask, could not the gift of Jesus be kept unchanged and pure? But instead of wondering we should see how natural it was and how necessary. This is the only way in which a great ideal could ever exert power in the world. In no other manner could it live from age to age and be effective. A great ideal that did not thus plunge into life and enter as a vital force into the common thoughts of men would be a fruitless thing. An ideal must take its place among actual working forces, and, so to speak, must take its chances among them. Its entrance into real life must be thorough and intimate, and its union with the living motives of humanity unreserved; otherwise it is a mere opinion on the shelf, open to consultation, but with no power to inspire. In this

necessary manner the ideal of Jesus has entered into union with innumerable conceptions and modes of life that were current in the world, and in a sense it has inevitably become entangled among them. It has never lost its power, but it has been much hindered of its force; for it blended often with something that could unite with it but poorly, and sometimes with something absolutely hostile. These chances it had to take if ever it was to win its victory.

Nothing else has ever been so certain of such fortune with all that it involved as the ideal of Jesus. Described in a word, it is the ideal of the highest living in religion and morals. Plainly this ideal is akin to all that is best and worthiest in man, and combines naturally with all the virtues. How ready they are to welcome it and be exalted by it! But plainly also it can be taken up without the abandonment of all that contradicts it. If it could not, it could have no saving power and no contact with a sinful race. Men may adopt it according to their light and virtue, and set their hearts upon it, and try to realize it, while yet there is much in them that would forbid or modify its victory. They may hold it, and love it in their measure, while yet they are selfish, or superstitious, or bound by bad habits, or too ignorant to know what it involves. Indeed, an ideal of lofty living is the very thing that cannot choose its company. If it is to do its work, it must enter for redemption's sake into union with all the existing forces of the world. The greatest evil will reject it. But all the intermediate grades between

that and its own high character will take it in, and bring it down somewhat toward themselves, and be purified by it into something better. All Christian history is one long tragic and glorious illustration of this process.

The ideal of Jesus long ago entered into union with a strong habit of metaphysical thinking. Seekers of God have felt the right and necessary impulse to think out subjects that loomed large in the field of religious experience, and have easily imagined that the thinking out of the religion was a part of the religion itself. Consequently, men have identified their mental constructions with the truth which they were intended to ascertain or to clarify. The truths that Jesus threw out into life have been robed in these intellectual garments of human make, and have come to be almost unrecognizable without them. Of course the garments changed the appearance of the truths; and yet it was in the robes that the truths were now known and accepted. Thus there grew up an ideal of metaphysical theologians, differing both in tone and in contents from the ideal of Jesus as we gather it from the Gospels; and hence there has come to exist for the church an ideal of orthodoxy. Essential to the ideal of life has been correctness of thought, by which was meant conformity to accepted beliefs. In the ordinary working Christian ideal, the idea of orthodoxy has thus taken a place that is out of proportion to its importance, if we judge its importance in the light of the Gospels. Consequently, in intimate association with this overworked idea of conformity

the ideal of Jesus has had to work itself out as best it could. Attention has been much transferred from life to thought, from character to correctness in doctrine, from work to belief, from the soul to the mind, from the broad field of society to the limited field of ecclesiastical relations; and the result has been that the ideal of Jesus has been somewhat deprived of its opportunity. Never altogether indeed, for that was impossible; but it has been distorted somewhat, and thrown out of its proportions, and weakened for its work, by too close blending with the ideal of orthodoxy.

Long ago the ideal of Jesus entered into union also with the idea and institutions of authority. This came most naturally to pass, in view of the character of the first period of Christianity. The Roman empire was a tremendous institution for an ideal to reckon with. It had its own ideals, not all unworthy, and served the world by means of them, but spiritual conceptions it had little power to apprehend, and it had no help to give to the ideal of Jesus. Indeed when the conflict came, it would have extinguished the ideal in blood if the ideal could have been so extinguished. But in its death, by one of the strangest turns in history, the empire handed on the bequest of its essential character to Christianity itself. The sense of the need of an authority on earth when the mighty power that had ruled the world was falling inspired the Christian force of the time to seize the throne and reign in the empire's stead in the name of God. The motive was more good than bad,

and it is hard to see how the event could have failed to occur; nevertheless the result was that the ideal of Jesus was compelled to live and work amid the manifold temptations that beset the possession of spiritual sovereignty. For centuries the church was veritably the successor to the empire, and the ideal of Jesus was wedded to the institutions of authority. In the largest part of Christendom the union still continues, and we are even now witnessing strong efforts to prevent the ideal of Christianity from getting away at all from that of authority. In this alliance the Christian ideal, so far from being disowned, has been held high, and the sincerest endeavor has been made to control life in the interest of its realization. But the Christian ideal does not contemplate such authority, or blend harmoniously with the idea of it. It is not a master, and it has no master, except God. Bearing a sceptre and a sword, it has not been able perfectly to be itself.

On the other hand, of course the ideal of Jesus has had to enter into union with the conception of liberty that is characteristic of the modern age. It has done much to encourage the democratic spirit, and, as it must, is blending with that spirit now wherever it is abroad. A Christian disciple of the modern democracy might think that the ideal had but to be set free from the bondage of external authority to come to perfection. But the faults are not all of one kind or in one place. Liberty has its dangers too. The ideal of Jesus finds itself striving for mastery in the broad struggle of free society.

At its side strong passions are released, mighty ambitions are awakened, powerful interests are at work. Its beloved people are open to the subtle temptations of freedom, and often hold it in alliance with a false independence. Not even in alliance with its kindred spirit, liberty, does it have its full opportunity and do its perfect work.

These glimpses are enough to show us that it is no reproach to the ideal of Jesus that we do not find it fully realized in the life of the world, even after all these centuries. It is inevitable that we should find it always combined and complicated with inferior or hostile forces, working its conquests by means of such alliances. Only so can its victories be won and its quality be imparted to the life of the world. It exists in these combinations, not in weakness but in power, not in despair but in hope. It is there to leaven the world in which Jesus left it. The task of history is to bring humanity into harmony with God, and the fortunes of the ideal of Jesus simply represent the process by which that work must be accomplished. That high ideal of life has to be tried out in history, and so do the inferior ideals that are tied to it with hampering effect. As we look on we pray, May the best cause win! and more and more it will win, and does. The mind of the world must be educated, and won, to judge and choose with God, and that is the work that is in progress. It is far enough from being finished, but we see the ideal of Jesus slowly winning victory after victory. No cataclysm has come to the rescue, taking the work

out of the hands of spiritual forces, but step by step thus far God has brought his kingdom on. In the same manner it seems likely that he is to continue. Spiritual forces have to take their time, but there are no other forces that can make spiritual conquest of a world.

But spiritual forces are quite able to produce something more than gradual and progressive change. It is quite possible that in due time the unexpected may occur. The day may come when society is so far awakened and enlightened as to take deliberate hold of the task of reforming itself on a magnificent scale, throwing out its old false principles, introducing methods of life that will work good instead of evil, reconstructing itself according to the ideal of Jesus. But if that comes to pass, as God grant it may, it will be simply an acceleration or concentration of the mighty work of God through human conscience and endeavor. It will not be a convulsion from without, but a continuation of the manner that Jesus initiated. Step by step will still be the method, but that step will be a great one; and after it many other great steps unpredictable by us may be found necessary and taken by the better-taught soul of mankind.

The present duty of Christian people may be illustrated from an interesting situation of our own time. The process of evolution has always been going on, of course, and the movement of nature and man has gone upon this principle, but no one knew it. The fact had not come into knowledge and been defined.

Only in the last half-century have men begun to understand the great process in which they are all involved. Lately men do begin to feel themselves in the midst of a great process, onward and mainly upward, of such nature that all that is put into the process of life will come out again in the quality of later stages. Since the dawning of this knowledge some have been awakened to feel that they are no true sons of their race unless they contribute their best will and effort to help the upward movement of humanity. That movement is not automatically certain to be the best; its upward tendency may be thwarted at any point by the ignorance or folly of men; but every human soul may actually take part in making it a better movement. The hope is, indeed, that the race itself may yet be awakened to take its evolution into its own hands and guide it by its own best intelligence and conscience. Therefore in the light of this new opportunity some true souls are studying the world and their own powers, and learning where to place their best endeavors, and putting their might into the promotion of a better evolution for mankind. Not a few have come to call it a privilege of the first order that they can thus place themselves at the service of the evolution of their race.

The case of the kingdom of God is unlike that of the doctrine of evolution, in that the knowledge of it is no new thing. From of old the kingdom of God has been known and loved and waited for, and men have been its servants. But the case is similar, in that men have not fully understood the service which

it was in their power to render to the kingdom. Here too is a great and all-pervasive movement in the world. It is divinely good, but humanly imperfect. It is working for the very noblest end, but is not working perfectly or tending straight toward the accomplishment of its purpose. The ideal of Jesus, worthy of God, is working toward the redemption of all human life from its characteristic evil, but it is working under difficulties. It is not alone and unhindered. It is combined, as a working force, with all manner of human imperfections. It works through human agents who do not altogether understand it or sympathize with it. It is burdened with results from ancient faults and errors. It is claimed in support of many an evil that has become allied with it. So it is hampered without and within in its work of winning the world to itself. Thus the movement of the kingdom of God in the world, which is identical with the work of Jesus' ideal, is not inherently certain to be the best: it is liable to inconsistencies of many kinds and is certain to fall below its own best possibilities.

That this situation is inevitable and a necessary part of the divine process, does not make it less worthy of our attention. It ought, rather, to call our attention all the more sharply to our own duty. The lesson is, that every soul is summoned to take part with the pure ideal of Jesus and help it toward its victory. We are all called to help the gospel of Christ to be itself. We must learn to distinguish things that differ, and approve the true. The Christian heart of to-day must set itself to release the high ideal of Jesus

from union with whatever contradicts it or prevents its power from going forth. It has suffered long from entangling alliances; it is ours to disentangle it from some of them and offer it free opportunity to do its work of blessing. It is in this way most of all that we are summoned to be workers together with God and with his Christ.

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